

**STATE PLAN FOR THE STATE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES PROGRAM AND  
STATE PLAN SUPPLEMENT FOR THE STATE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES  
PROGRAM**

**STATE:** ARIZONA

**AGENCY:** DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC SECURITY

**AGENCY TYPE:** GENERAL ☐ BLIND ☐ COMBINED ☒

**SECTION 1: LEGAL BASIS AND STATE CERTIFICATIONS**

- 1.1** The Department of Economic Security (name of designated State agency or designated State unit) is authorized to submit this State plan under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended<sup>1</sup> and its supplement under title VI, part B of the Act.<sup>2</sup>
- 1.2** As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title I, part B of the Act for the provision of vocational rehabilitation services, the Department of Economic Security (name of the designated State agency)<sup>3</sup> agrees to operate and administer the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program in accordance with the provisions of this State plan<sup>4</sup>, the Act, and all applicable regulations<sup>5</sup>, policies, and procedures established by the Secretary. Funds made available under section 111 of the Act are used solely for the provision of vocational rehabilitation services under title I and the administration of this State plan.
- 1.3** As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title VI, part B of the Act for supported employment services, the designated State agency agrees to operate and administer the State Supported Employment Services Program in accordance with the provisions of the supplement to this State plan<sup>6</sup>, the Act, and all applicable regulations<sup>7</sup>, policies, and procedures established by the Secretary. Funds made available under title VI, part B are used solely for the provision of supported employment services and the administration of the supplement to the title I State plan.
- 1.4** The designated State agency and/or the designated State unit has the authority under State law to perform the functions of the State regarding this State plan and its supplement.
- 1.5** The State legally may carry out each provision of the State plan and its supplement.
- 1.6** All provisions of the State plan and its supplement are consistent with State law.
- 1.7** The Director of the Department of Economic Security (title of State officer) has the authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under this State plan and its supplement.
- 1.8** The Director of the Department of Economic Security (title of State officer) has the authority to submit this State plan for vocational rehabilitation services and the State plan supplement for supported employment services.
- 1.9** The agency that submits this State plan and its supplement has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan and its supplement.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** July 1, 2000

**1.10**    *The effective date of this State plan and its supplement is \_\_\_\_\_.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

**John L Clayton**  
(Typed Name of Signatory)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

**Director**  
(Title)

<sup>1</sup>    *Public Law 93-112, as amended by Public Laws 93-516, 95-602, 98-221, 99-506, 100-630, 102-569, 103-073, and 105-220.*

<sup>2</sup>    *Unless otherwise stated, "Act" means the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.*

<sup>3</sup>    *All references in this plan to "designated State agency" or to "the State agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.*

<sup>4</sup>    *No funds under title I of the Act may be awarded without an approved State plan in accordance with section 101(a) of the Act and 34 CFR part 361.*

<sup>5</sup>    *Applicable regulations include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 74, 76, 77, 79, 80, 81, 82, 85, and 86 and the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program regulations in 34 CFR part 361.*

<sup>6</sup>    *No funds under title VI, part B of the Act may be awarded without an approved supplement to the title I State plan in accordance with section 625(a) of the Act.*

<sup>7</sup>    *Applicable regulations include the EDGAR citations in footnote 5, 34 CFR part 361, and 34 CFR part 363.*

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## **SECTION 2: PUBLIC COMMENT ON STATE PLAN POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### **2.1 Public participation requirements.** *(Section 101(a)(16)(A) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.20(a)(1) and (2), (b), and (d), and 363.11(g)(9))*

- (a) The designated State agency, prior to the adoption of any policies or procedures governing the provision of vocational rehabilitation services under the State plan and supported employment services under the supplement to the State plan, including making any amendment to such policies and procedures, conducts public meetings throughout the State to provide the public, including individuals with disabilities, an opportunity to comment on the policies or procedures, and actively consults with the Director of the client assistance program carried out under section 112 of the Act, and, as appropriate, Indian tribes, tribal organizations, and Native Hawaiian organizations on the policies or procedures.*
- (b) The designated State agency provides adequate notice of the meetings in accordance with State law governing public meetings, or, in the absence of such State law, in accordance with procedures developed by the State agency in consultation with the State Rehabilitation Council, if the agency has a Council.*

### **2.2 State review process.** *(34 CFR Part 79)*

*If the State plan, its supplement, or amendment to the State plan is subject to the State review process, such materials are reviewed and commented on in accordance with the provisions of Executive Order 12372, and comments provided by the State review process are transmitted to the Rehabilitation Services Administration.*

*This State plan and its supplement are subject to the State review process.*

Yes   X   No

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### **SECTION 3: SUBMISSION OF THE STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT**

#### **3.1 Submittal of the State plan, its supplement, and revisions to the plan and its supplement.** (Sections 101(a)(1), (23) and 625(a)(1) of the Act)

- (a) *The State submits to the Commissioner a State plan for vocational rehabilitation services that meets the requirements of section 101 of the Act and a State plan supplement for supported employment services that meets the requirements of section 625 of the Act on the same date that the State submits a State plan under section 112 of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998.*
- (b) *If the State submits a State unified plan under section 501(b) of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 that includes the State plan for vocational rehabilitation services and its supplement for supported employment services in the unified plan, the State submits to the Commissioner the State plan for vocational rehabilitation services and its supplement for supported employment services on the same date that the State submits its unified plan under section 501(b) of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998.*
- (c) *The State submits only those policies, procedures, or descriptions required under this State plan and its supplement that have not been previously submitted to and approved by the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration.*
- (d) *The State submits to the Commissioner at such time and in such manner as the Secretary determines to be appropriate, reports containing annual updates of the information relating to the:*
  - (1) *comprehensive system of personnel development;*
  - (2) *assessments, estimates, goals and priorities, and reports of progress;*
  - (3) *innovation and expansion activities; and*
  - (4) *requirements under title I, part B or title VI, part B of the Act.*
- (e) *The State plan and its supplement are in effect subject to the submission of such modifications as the State determines to be necessary or as the Commissioner may require based on a change in State policy, a change in Federal law, including regulations, an interpretation of the Act by a Federal court or the highest court of the State, or a finding by the Commissioner of State noncompliance with the requirements of the Act, until the State submits and receives approval of a new State plan or plan supplement.*

#### **3.2 Supported employment plan.** (Sections 101(a)(22) and 625(a) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.34 and 363.10)

*The State has an acceptable plan for carrying out part B of title VI of the Act, including the use of funds under that part to supplement funds made available under part B of title I of the Act to pay for the cost of services leading to supported employment.*

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#### **SECTION 4: ADMINISTRATION OF THE STATE PLAN**

**4.1 Designated State agency and designated State unit.** (Sections 101(a)(2) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.13)

**(a) Designated State agency.**

(1) *There is a State agency designated as the sole State agency to administer the State plan, or to supervise its administration in a political subdivision of the State by a sole local agency.*

(2) *The designated State agency is:*

\_\_\_\_\_ *primarily concerned with vocational rehabilitation, or vocational and other rehabilitation, of individuals with disabilities; or*

  X   *not primarily concerned with vocational rehabilitation, or vocational and other rehabilitation, of individuals with disabilities.*

(3) *In American Samoa, the designated State agency is the Governor.*

**(b) Designated State unit.**

(1) *If the designated State agency is not primarily concerned with vocational rehabilitation, or vocational and other rehabilitation, of individuals with disabilities, the State agency includes a vocational rehabilitation bureau, division, or other organizational unit that:*

(A) *is primarily concerned with vocational rehabilitation, or vocational and other rehabilitation, of individuals with disabilities, and is responsible for the designated State agency's vocational rehabilitation program, including those responsibilities specified in subparagraph (5) of this paragraph of the State plan;*

(B) *has a full-time director;*

(C) *has a staff, at least 90 percent of whom are employed full time on the rehabilitation work of the organizational unit;*

(D) *is located at an organizational level and has an organizational status within the designated State agency comparable to that of other major organizational units of the designated State agency; and*

(E) *at a minimum, has the following responsibilities that cannot be delegated to any other agency or individual:*

(i) *all decisions affecting eligibility for vocational rehabilitation services, the nature and scope of available services, and the provision of services;*

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- (ii) *a determination that an individual has ended participation in the vocational rehabilitation program and achieved an employment outcome after receiving vocational rehabilitation services;*
- (iii) *policy formulation and implementation; and*
- (iv) *allocation and expenditure of vocational rehabilitation funds.*

(2) *The name of the designated State unit is Rehabilitation Services Administration.*

**4.2 *State independent commission or state rehabilitation council.*** (Sections 101(a)(21) and 105 of the Act; 34 CFR 361.16 and .17)

*The State plan must contain one of the following two assurances.*

(a)      *The designated State agency is an independent commission that:*

- (1) *is responsible under State law for operating, or overseeing the operation of, the vocational rehabilitation program in the State;*
- (2) *is consumer-controlled by persons who:*
  - (A) *are individuals with physical or mental impairments that substantially limit major life activities; and*
  - (B) *represent individuals with a broad range of disabilities, unless the designated State unit under the direction of the commission is the State agency for individuals who are blind;*
- (3) *includes family members, advocates, or other representatives, of individuals with mental impairments; and*
- (4) *undertakes the functions set forth in section 105(c)(4) of the Act;*

***or***

(b)   X   *The State has established a State Rehabilitation Council that meets the criteria set forth in section 105 of the Act and the designated State unit:*

- (1) *jointly with the Council develops, agrees to, and reviews annually State goals and priorities, and jointly submits annual reports of progress with the Council, consistent with the provisions of section 101(a)(15) of the Act and section 4.12 of this State plan;*
- (2) *regularly consults with the Council regarding the development, implementation, and revision of State policies and procedures of general applicability pertaining to the provision of vocational rehabilitation services;*

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- (3) *includes in the State plan and in any revision to the State plan, a summary of input provided by the Council, including recommendations from the annual report of the Council, the review and analysis of consumer satisfaction, and other reports prepared by the Council, and the response of the designated State unit to such input and recommendations, including explanations for rejecting any input or recommendation; and*
- (4) *transmits to the Council:*
  - (A) *all plans, reports, and other information required under title I of the Act to be submitted to the Secretary;*
  - (B) *all policies and information on all practices and procedures of general applicability provided to or used by rehabilitation personnel in carrying out this State plan; and*
  - (C) *copies of due process hearing decisions issued under title I of the Act, which are transmitted in such a manner as to ensure that the identity of the participants in the hearings is kept confidential.*
- (c) **If the designated State unit has a State Rehabilitation Council, Attachment 4.2(c)** *provides a summary of the input provided by the Council consistent with the provisions identified in subparagraph (b)(3) of this subsection of the State plan, the response of the designated State unit to the input and recommendations, and explanations for the rejection of any input or any recommendation.*

**4.3 Consultations regarding the administration of the state plan.** (Section 101(a)(16)(B) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.21(a))

*The designated State agency takes into account, in connection with matters of general policy arising in the administration of the plan, the views of:*

- (a) *individuals and groups of individuals who are recipients of vocational rehabilitation services, or in appropriate cases, the individuals' representatives;*
- (b) *personnel working in programs that provide vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities;*
- (c) *providers of vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities;*
- (d) *the Director of the client assistance program; and*
- (e) *the State Rehabilitation Council, if the State has such a Council.*

**4.4 Non-federal share.** (Section 101(a)(3) of the Act; 34 CFR 80.24 and 361.60(b))

*The non-Federal share of the cost of carrying out this State plan is 21.3 per centum and it is provided through the financial participation by the State, or if the State elects, by the State and local agencies.*

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**4.5 Local administration.** (Section 101(a)(2)(A) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.15)

- (a) *The State plan provides for local administration and each local agency is under the supervision of the designated State unit and is the sole local agency responsible for the administration of the program within the political subdivision that it serves.*

Yes \_\_\_ No X

- (b) **IF YES, Attachment 4.5** identifies each local agency and describes the methods each local agency uses to administer the vocational rehabilitation program in accordance with this State plan.

**4.6 Statewideness and waivers of statewideness.** (Sections 101(a)(2)(A) and (4)(A) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.25 and .26)

*The State plan is in effect in all political subdivisions of the State, except in the case when:*

- (a) *The State unit is providing services in one or more political subdivisions of the State that increase services or expand the scope of services that are available statewide under this State plan and the:*
- (1) *non-Federal share of the cost of these services is met from funds provided by a local public agency, including funds contributed to a local public agency by a private agency, organization, or individual; and*
  - (2) *services are likely to promote the vocational rehabilitation of substantially larger numbers of individuals with disabilities or of individuals with disabilities with particular types of impairments.*
  - (3) *If the State is providing services that meet the provisions of subparagraphs (a)(1) and (2) of this subsection, **Attachment 4.6(a)(3)** requests a waiver of statewideness in accordance with the requirements in 34 CFR 361.26(b); or*
- (b) *Earmarked funds are used toward the non-Federal share and such funds are earmarked for particular geographic areas within the State contingent on the State notifying the Commissioner that it cannot provide the full non-Federal share without the use of such earmarked funds.*

**4.7 Shared funding and administration of joint programs.** (Section 101(a)(2)(A)(ii) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.27)

- (a) *The designated State agency is carrying out a joint program involving shared funding and administrative responsibility with another State agency or a local public agency to provide services to individuals with disabilities.*

Yes \_\_\_ No X

- (b) **IF YES, Attachment 4.7(b)** describes the:

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- (1) *nature and scope of the joint program;*
- (2) *services to be provided;*
- (3) *respective roles of each participating agency in the provision of services and their administration; and*
- (4) *share of the costs to be assumed by each agency.*
- (c) *If the joint program provides services in one or more political subdivisions of the State, the State requests a waiver of statewideness in accordance with the provisions of 34 CFR 361.26 and subparagraph 4.6(a)(3) of this State plan subsection.*

**4.8 *Third-party cooperative arrangements involving funds from other public agencies* (Section 12 of the Act; 34 CFR 361.28)**

- (a) *The designated State unit has entered into a third-party cooperative arrangement for providing or administering vocational rehabilitation services with another State agency or a local public agency that is furnishing part or all of the non-Federal share.*

*Yes* \_\_\_ *No* *X*

**(b) IF YES:**

- (1) *The services provided by the cooperating agency are not the customary or typical services provided by that agency but are new services that have a vocational rehabilitation focus or are existing services that have been modified, adapted, expanded, or reconfigured to have a vocational rehabilitation focus.*
- (2) *The services provided by the cooperating agency are only available to applicants for, or recipients of, services from the designated State unit.*
- (3) *Program expenditures and staff providing services under the cooperative arrangement are under the administrative supervision of the designated State unit.*
- (4) *All State plan requirements, including the State's order of selection, if an order is in effect, apply to all services provided under the cooperative program.*
- (c) *If the third-party cooperative program provides services in one or more political subdivisions of the State, the State requests a waiver of statewideness in accordance with the provisions of 34 CFR 361.26 and subparagraph 4.6(a)(3) of this State plan.*

**4.9 *Cooperation, collaboration, and coordination.* (Sections 101(a)(11) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.22, .23 and .24)**

- (a) *Cooperative agreements with other components of statewide workforce investment systems.*

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*The designated State agency has cooperative agreements with other entities that are components of the statewide workforce investment system of the State in accordance with the provisions of section 101(a)(11)(A) of the Act.*

**(b) Replication of cooperative agreements.**

*The designated State agency replicates the cooperative agreement identified in paragraph (a) of this subsection of the State plan at the local level between individual offices of the designated State unit and local entities carrying out activities through the statewide workforce investment system.*

**(c) Interagency cooperation with other agencies and entities.**

*Attachment 4.9(c) describes the:*

- (1) interagency cooperation with, and utilization of the services and facilities of the Federal, State, and local agencies and programs, including programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the United States Department of Agriculture and State use contracting programs, to the extent that such agencies and programs are not carrying out activities through the statewide workforce investment system;*
- (2) coordination, consistent with the requirements of paragraph 4.9(d) of this subsection, with education officials to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from school to the receipt of vocational rehabilitation services;*
- (3) manner in which the designated State agency establishes cooperative agreements with private non-profit vocational rehabilitation service providers, consistent with the requirements of paragraph 5.6(b) of the State plan; and,*
- (4) efforts of the designated State agency to identify and make arrangements, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other State agencies and entities with respect to the provision of supported employment and extended services for individuals with the most significant disabilities, consistent with the requirements of subsection 7.5 of the supplement to this State plan.*

**(d) Coordination with education officials.**

*Plans, policies, and procedures for coordination between the designated State agency and education officials responsible for the public education of students with disabilities that are designed to facilitate the transition of the students who are individuals with disabilities from the receipt of educational services in school to the receipt of vocational rehabilitation services under this State plan are described in **Attachment 4.9(c)(2)** which also includes information on a formal interagency agreement with the State educational agency that, at a minimum, provides for:*

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- (1) *consultation and technical assistance to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including vocational rehabilitation services;*
- (2) *transition planning by personnel of the designated State agency and the educational agency for students with disabilities that facilitates the development and completion of their individualized education programs under section 614(d) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act;*
- (3) *the roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining State lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services; and*
- (4) *procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services.*

**(e) *Coordination with statewide independent living council and independent living centers.***

*The designated State unit, the Statewide Independent Living Council established under section 705 of the Act, and the independent living centers described in part C of title VII of the Act within the State have developed working relationships and coordinate their activities.*

**(f) *Cooperative agreement with recipients of grants for services to American Indians.***

- (1) *There is in the State a recipient(s) of a grant under part C of title I of the Act for the provision of vocational rehabilitation services for American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing on or near Federal and State reservations.*

Yes X No

- (2) **IF YES,** *the designated State agency has entered into a formal cooperative agreement with each grant recipient in the State that receives funds under part C of title I of the Act. The agreement(s) describes strategies for collaboration and coordination in providing vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities, including:*
  - (A) *strategies for interagency referral and information sharing that assist in eligibility determinations and the development of individualized plans for employment;*
  - (B) *procedures for ensuring that American Indians who are individuals with disabilities and who are living near a reservation or tribal service area are provided vocational rehabilitation services; and*
  - (C) *provisions for sharing resources in cooperative studies and assessments, joint training activities, and other collaborative activities designed to improve the provision of services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities.*

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**(g) Reciprocal referral services with a separate agency for individuals who are blind.**

*In those States in which there is a separate designated State unit for individuals who are blind and also a designated State unit for all other individuals with disabilities, the two State units:*

- (1) have established reciprocal referral services;*
- (2) use each other's services and facilities to the extent feasible;*
- (3) jointly plan activities to improve services in the State for individuals with multiple impairments, including visual impairments; and*
- (4) otherwise cooperate to provide more effective services, including, if appropriate, entering into a written cooperative agreement.*

**4.10 Methods of administration.** (Sections 101(a)(6) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.12, .19 and .51(a) and (c))

**(a) General.**

*The State agency employs methods of administration found by the Commissioner to be necessary for the proper and efficient administration of this State plan.*

**(b) Employment of individuals with disabilities.**

*The designated State agency and entities carrying out community rehabilitation programs in the State, who are in receipt of assistance under title I of the Act, take affirmative action to employ and advance in employment qualified individuals with disabilities covered under and on the same terms and conditions as set forth in section 503 of the Act.*

**(c) Written standards for providers of services.**

*The designated State agency has established, maintains, makes available to the public, and implements written minimum standards for the various types of providers used by the designated State unit in providing vocational rehabilitation services under this State plan.*

**(d) Facilities.**

*Facilities used in connection with the delivery of services assisted under this State plan comply with the provisions of the Act entitled "An Act to insure that certain buildings financed with Federal funds are so designed and constructed as to be accessible to the physically handicapped", approved on August 12, 1968 (commonly known as the "Architectural Barriers Act of 1968"), with section 504 of the Act and with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.*

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**4.11 Comprehensive system of personnel development.** (Section 101(a)(7) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.18)

- (a) *The designated State agency has implemented a comprehensive system of personnel development that meets the requirements of section 101(a)(7) of the Act and 34 CFR 361.18.*
- (b) *Attachment 4.11(b) describes the designated State agency=s policies, procedures and activities to establish and maintain a comprehensive system of personnel development designed to ensure an adequate supply of qualified State rehabilitation professional and paraprofessional personnel for the designated State unit. The description addresses the following requirements:*
  - (1) *collection and analysis on an annual basis of data on qualified personnel needs and personnel development consistent with the provisions of 34 CFR 361.18(a);*
  - (2) *plan to address the current and projected needs for qualified personnel including the coordination and facilitation of efforts between the designated State unit and institutions of higher education and professional associations to recruit, prepare, and retain qualified personnel, including personnel from minority backgrounds, and personnel who are individuals with disabilities;*
  - (3) *establishment and maintenance of personnel standards meeting the requirements of 34 CFR 361.18(c) to ensure that personnel, including professionals and paraprofessionals, are adequately trained and prepared, including:*
    - (A) *standards that are consistent with any national or State-approved or recognized certification, licensing, registration, or, in the absence of these requirements, other comparable requirements that apply to the profession or discipline in which such personnel are providing vocational rehabilitation services; and*
    - (B) *to the extent that such standards are not based on the highest requirements in the State applicable to a particular profession or discipline, the steps the State is currently taking and the steps the State plans to take to retrain or hire personnel within the designated State unit so that such personnel meet standards that are based on the highest requirements in the State;*
  - (4) *standards to ensure the availability of personnel within the designated State unit or other individuals who are, to the maximum extent feasible, trained to communicate in the native language or mode of communication of an applicant or eligible individual;*
  - (5) *staff development to ensure that all personnel employed by the designated State unit receive appropriate and adequate training; and*
  - (6) *coordination of its personnel development system with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.*

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**4.12 Annual state goals and reports of progress.** (Sections 101(a)(15), 105(c)(2) and 625(b)(2) of the Act; 34 CFR 363.11(b))

**(a) Assessments and estimates.**

- (1)** *Attachment 4.12(a) documents the results of a comprehensive, statewide assessment, jointly conducted by the designated State unit and the State Rehabilitation Council (if the State has such a Council) every 3 years, and:*
  - (A)** *describes the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the State, particularly the vocational rehabilitation services needs of:*
    - (i)** *individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment services;*
    - (ii)** *individuals with disabilities who are minorities and individuals with disabilities who have been unserved or underserved by the vocational rehabilitation program carried out under this State plan; and*
    - (iii)** *individuals with disabilities served through other components of the statewide workforce investment system, as identified by such individuals and personnel assisting such individuals through the components.*
  - (B)** *provides an assessment of the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs within the State.*
- (2)** *For any year in which the State revises the assessments, the designated State unit submits to the Commissioner a report containing information regarding revisions to the assessments.*

**(b) Annual estimates.**

*The designated State agency annually submits **Attachment 4.12(b)** that includes, State estimates of the:*

- (1)** *number of individuals in the State who are eligible for services under this State plan;*
- (2)** *number of such individuals who will receive services provided with funds provided under part B of title I of the Act and under part B of title VI of the Act, including, if the designated State agency uses an order of selection in accordance with paragraph 6.4(c) of this State plan, estimates of the number of individuals to be served under each priority category within the order; and*

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- (3) *costs of the services described in subparagraph (1), including, if the designated State agency uses an order of selection, the service costs for each priority category within the order.*

(c) ***Goals and priorities.***

- (1) ***Attachment 4.12(c)(1)*** identifies the goals and priorities of the State in carrying out the vocational rehabilitation and supported employment programs and also identifies any revisions in the goals and priorities for any year the State revises the goals and priorities.

- (2) ***Order of selection.***

- (A) *If the State agency is operating on an order of selection, **Attachment 4.12(c)(2)(A)** shows the order to be followed in selecting eligible individuals to be provided vocational rehabilitation services and provides a justification for the order, the service and outcome goals, and the time within which these goals may be achieved for individuals in each priority category consistent with the provisions of paragraph 6.4(c) of this State plan.*

- (B) *If, however, the agency assures in paragraph 6.4(a) of this State plan that it can provide the full range of services identified in subsection 5.1 of this State plan to all eligible individuals, **Attachment 4.12(c)(2)(B)** satisfies all of the provisions identified in paragraph 6.4(b) of the State plan.*

- (3) ***Goals and plans for distribution of title VI, part B funds.***

***Attachment 4.12(c)(3)** specifies, consistent with subsection 7.4 of the State plan supplement, the State's goals and priorities with respect to the distribution of funds received under section 622 of the Act for the provision of supported employment services.*

- (4) ***Basis.***

*The goals and priorities are based on:*

- (A) *the analysis of the comprehensive assessment and any revisions in the assessment consistent with the provisions of paragraph 4.12(a) of this State plan;*
  - (B) *the performance of the State on the standards and indicators established under section 106 of the Act; and*
  - (C) *other available information on the operation of the vocational rehabilitation and supported employment programs, including reports from the State Rehabilitation Council, if the State has a Council, and the*

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*findings of monitoring activities carried out by the Rehabilitation Services Administration.*

- (5) *In accordance with the provisions of section 101(a)(15)(C)(ii) and (iii) of the Act, the goals and priorities, including any revisions to the goals and priorities, are jointly developed, agreed to, and reviewed annually by the designated State unit and the State Rehabilitation Council, if the State has such a Council.*

**(d) *Strategies.***

*Attachment 4.12(d) describes the strategies, including those identified in section 101(a)(15)(D) of the Act and the innovation and expansion activities of paragraph 4.13(a) of this State plan, the designated State agency will use to:*

- (1) *address the needs identified in the assessment conducted under paragraph (a) of this subsection and achieve the goals and priorities identified in paragraph (c) of this subsection;*
- (2) *carryout outreach activities to identify and serve individuals with the most significant disabilities who are minorities consistent with the provisions of subsection 7.6 of the State plan supplement; and*
- (3) *overcome identified barriers relating to equitable access to and participation of individuals with disabilities in the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program and State Supported Employment Services Program.*

**(e) *Evaluation and reports of progress.***

*Attachment 4.12(e) describes the results of an evaluation of the effectiveness of the vocational rehabilitation program, and includes an annual joint report of the designated State unit and the State Rehabilitation Council, if the State has such a Council, to the Commissioner on the progress made in improving the effectiveness of the program from the previous year. The description includes:*

- (1) *an evaluation of the extent to which the goals identified in subparagraph (c) of this subsection plan were achieved;*
- (2) *an identification of the strategies that contributed to achieving the goals;*
- (3) *to the extent to which the goals were not achieved, an explanation of the factors that impeded that achievement;*
- (4) *an assessment of the performance of the State on the standards and indicators established pursuant to section 106 of the Act; and*
- (5) *a report consistent with paragraph 4.13(c) of this State plan on how the funds reserved for innovation and expansion activities were utilized in the preceding year.*

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**4.13 Innovation and expansion.** (Section 101(a)(18) of the Act)

- (a) *The designated State agency reserves and uses a portion of the funds allotted to the State under section 110 of the Act:*
- (1) *for the development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities under this State plan, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities, consistent with the findings of the statewide assessment and goals and priorities of the State identified in paragraphs 4.12(a) and (c) of this State plan; and*
- (2) *to support the funding of the State Rehabilitation Council, if the State has such a Council, consistent with the resource plan prepared under section 105(d)(1) of the Act, and the funding of the Statewide Independent Living Council, consistent with the resource plan prepared under section 705(e)(1) of the Act.*
- (b) **Attachment 4.12(d)** *describes how the reserved funds identified in paragraph (a) of this subsection of this State plan will be utilized.*
- (c) **Attachment 4.12(e)** *describes how the reserved funds were utilized in the preceding year.*

**4.14 State-imposed requirements.** (Section 17 of the Act; 34 CFR 361.39)

*The designated State unit identifies upon request those regulations and policies relating to the administration or operation of its vocational rehabilitation and supported employment programs that are State-imposed, including any regulations or policy based on State interpretation of any Federal law, regulations, or guidelines.*

**4.15 Protection, use, and release of personal information.** (Sections 12(c) and 101(a)(6)(A) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.38)

*The designated State agency and the designated State unit have policies and procedures that are consistent with the provisions in 34 CFR 361.38 to safeguard the confidentiality of all personal information, including photographs and lists of names.*

**4.16 Mediation and impartial due process hearing.** (Section 102(c) of the Act)

(a) **Fair hearing board.**

*There is a fair hearing board, established by the State prior to January 1, 1985, that is authorized under State law to review determinations or decisions made under the Act and to carry out the responsibilities of the impartial hearing officer.*

Yes X No

(b) **Mediation and review procedures.**

**IF THE ANSWER TO (a) IS "NO":**

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- (1) *The designated State agency has established procedures consistent with the requirements of section 102(c) of the Act for mediation of and procedures for the review through an impartial due process hearing of determinations made by personnel of the designated State unit that affect the provision of vocational rehabilitation services to applicants or eligible individuals.*
- (2) *Attachment 4.16(b)(2) contains the procedures for mediation; the procedures for review through an impartial due process hearing; and, the procedures to seek an impartial review of the decision of the hearing officer, including the standards for reviewing decisions of an hearing officer, if the designated State agency has elected to implement such review procedures.*

**IF THE ANSWER TO (a) IS "YES":**

- (1) *The designated State agency has established procedures consistent with the requirements of section 102(c) of the Act for mediation of determinations made by personnel of the designated State unit that affect the provision of vocational rehabilitation services to applicants or eligible individuals.*
- (2) *Attachment 4.16(b)(2) contains the procedures for mediation.*

**4.17 Reports.** (Section 101(a)(10) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.40)

- (a) *The designated State unit submits reports in the form and level of detail and at the time required by the Commissioner regarding applicants for and eligible individuals receiving services under the State plan.*
- (b) *Information submitted in the reports provides a complete count, unless sampling techniques are used, of the applicants and eligible individuals in a manner that permits the greatest possible cross-classification of data and ensures the confidentiality of the identity of each individual.*

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## **SECTION 5: SCOPE OF THE STATE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES PROGRAM**

### **5.1 *Scope of vocational rehabilitation services for individuals with disabilities.* (Section 103(a) of the Act)**

*Vocational rehabilitation services provided under this State plan are any services described in an individualized plan for employment necessary to assist an individual with a disability in preparing for, securing, retaining, or regaining an employment outcome that is consistent with the strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice of the individual, including:*

- (a) an assessment for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs by qualified personnel, including, if appropriate, an assessment by personnel skilled in rehabilitation technology;*
- (b) counseling and guidance, including information and support services to assist an individual in exercising informed choice consistent with the provisions of section 102(d) of the Act and subsection 5.3 of this State plan;*
- (c) referral and other services to secure needed services from other agencies through agreements developed under section 101(a)(11) of the Act and subsection 4.9 of this State plan, if such services are not available under this State plan;*
- (d) job-related services, including job search and placement assistance, job retention services, follow-up services, and follow-along services;*
- (e) vocational and other training services, including the provision of personal and vocational adjustment services, books, tools, and other training materials, except that no training services provided at an institution of higher education shall be paid for with funds under this State plan unless maximum efforts have been made by the designated State unit and the individual to secure grant assistance, in whole or in part, from other sources to pay for such training;*
- (f) to the extent that financial support is not readily available from a source (such as through health insurance of the individual or through comparable services and benefits consistent with section 101(a)(8)(A) of the Act and subsection 6.8 of this State plan), other than the designated State unit, diagnosis and treatment of physical and mental impairments, including:*
  - (1) corrective surgery or therapeutic treatment necessary to correct or substantially modify a physical or mental condition that constitutes a substantial impediment to employment, but is of such a nature that such correction or modification may reasonably be expected to eliminate or reduce such impediment to employment within a reasonable length of time;*
  - (2) necessary hospitalization in connection with surgery or treatment;*
  - (3) prosthetic and orthotic devices;*

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- (4) *eyeglasses and visual services as prescribed by qualified personnel who meet State licensure laws and who are selected by the individual;*
- (5) *special services (including transplantation and dialysis), artificial kidneys, and supplies necessary for the treatment of individuals with end-stage renal disease; and*
- (6) *diagnosis and treatment for mental and emotional disorders by qualified personnel who meet State licensure laws;*
- (g) *maintenance for additional costs incurred while participating in an assessment for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs or while receiving services under an individualized plan for employment;*
- (h) *transportation, including adequate training in the use of public transportation vehicles and systems, that is provided in connection with the provision of any other service described in this subsection and needed by the individual to achieve an employment outcome;*
- (i) *on-the-job or other related personal assistance services provided while an individual is receiving other services described in this subsection;*
- (j) *interpreter services provided by qualified personnel for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, and reader services for individuals who are determined to be blind, after an examination by qualified personnel who meet State licensure laws;*
- (k) *rehabilitation teaching services, and orientation and mobility services, for individuals who are blind;*
- (l) *occupational licenses, tools, equipment, and initial stocks and supplies;*
- (m) *technical assistance and other consultation services to conduct market analyses, develop business plans, and otherwise provide resources, to the extent such resources are authorized to be provided under the statewide workforce investment system, to eligible individuals who are pursuing self-employment or telecommuting or establishing a small business operation as an employment outcome;*
- (n) *rehabilitation technology, including telecommunications, sensory, and other technological aids and devices;*
- (o) *transition services for students with disabilities that facilitate the achievement of the employment outcome identified in the individualized plan for employment;*
- (p) *supported employment services;*
- (q) *services to the family of an individual with a disability necessary to assist the individual to achieve an employment outcome; and*

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- (r) *specific post-employment services necessary to assist an individual with a disability to retain, regain, or advance in employment.*

**5.2 *Written policies governing the provision of services to individuals with disabilities.*** (Sections 12(c) and 101(a)(6)(A) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.50)

- (a) *The State unit has written policies covering the nature and scope of each of the vocational rehabilitation services specified in section 103(a) of the Act and subsection 5.1 of this State plan and the criteria under which each service is provided.*
- (b) *The policies are consistent with the provisions in 34 CFR 361.50 and:*
  - (1) *ensure that the provision of services is based on the rehabilitation needs of each individual as identified in that individual's individualized plan for employment; and*
  - (2) *do not establish any arbitrary limits on the nature and scope of services to be provided to the individual to achieve an employment outcome.*

**5.3 *Opportunity to make informed choices regarding the selection of services and providers.*** (Sections 101(a)(19) and 102(d) of the Act)

*Applicants and eligible individuals, or, as appropriate, the applicants' representatives or the individuals' representatives, are provided information and support services to assist the applicants and eligible individuals in exercising informed choice throughout the rehabilitation process, consistent with the provisions of section 102(d) of the Act.*

**5.4 *Services to American Indians.*** (Section 101(a)(13) of the Act)

*Except as otherwise provided in part C of title I of the Act, the designated State unit provides vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing in the State to the same extent as the designated State agency provides such services to other significant populations of individuals with disabilities residing in the State.*

**5.5 *Scope of vocational rehabilitation services to groups of individuals with disabilities.*** (Sections 101(a)(17) and 103(b) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.49, .61 and .62)

- (a) *The State plan provides for the following optional vocational rehabilitation services for the benefit of groups of individuals with disabilities.*
  - (1) X *The establishment, development, or improvement of community rehabilitation programs, including, under special circumstances, the construction of a community rehabilitation facility, that are used to provide services to promote integration and competitive employment.*

*If the State elects to use the authority to construct a facility for a community rehabilitation program, the following requirements are met:*

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- (A) *The Federal share of the cost of construction for facilities for a fiscal year does not exceed an amount equal to 10 percent of the State's allotment under section 110 of the Act for that fiscal year.*
  - (B) *The provisions of section 306 of the Act that were in effect prior to the enactment of the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998 apply to such construction.*
  - (C) *There is compliance with the requirements in 34 CFR 361.62(b) that ensure the use of the construction authority will not reduce the efforts of the designated State agency in providing other vocational rehabilitation services, other than the establishment of facilities for community rehabilitation programs.*
- (2) *\_\_\_ Telecommunications systems, including telephone, television, satellite, radio, and similar systems, that have the potential for substantially improving service delivery methods of activities described in this section of this State plan and developing appropriate programming to meet the particular needs of individuals with disabilities.*
  - (3) *X Special services to provide nonvisual access to information for individuals who are blind, including the use of telecommunications, Braille, sound recordings, or other appropriate media; captioned television, films, or video cassettes for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing; tactile materials for individuals who are deaf-blind; and other special services that provide information through tactile, vibratory, auditory, and visual media.*
  - (4) *\_\_\_ Technical assistance and support services to businesses that are not subject to title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and that are seeking to employ individuals with disabilities.*
  - (5) *X Small business enterprises operated by individuals with significant disabilities, the operation of which can be improved by the management services and supervision of the designated State agency, along or together with the acquisition by the designated State agency of vending facilities or other equipment and initial stocks and supplies.*
    - (A) *If the State unit provides small business enterprise services, only individuals with significant disabilities are selected to participate in this supervised program.*
    - (B) *If the State unit sets aside funds from the proceeds of the operation of the small business enterprises, it has a description of the methods used in setting aside funds and the purposes for which funds are set aside.*
    - (C) *Under its small business enterprises, the State unit provides:*
      - (i) *X only the Randolph-Sheppard Vending Facility Program;*

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- (ii)      only a program or programs other than the Randolph-Sheppard Vending Facility Program;
  - (iii)      both the Randolph-Sheppard Vending Facility Program and another program(s).
- (6)   X   Consultative and technical assistance services to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including employment.
- (7)   X   Other services that promise to contribute substantially to the rehabilitation of a group of individuals but that are not related directly to the individualized plan for employment of any one individual with a disability.
- (b) If the State plan provides for any of these services to groups of individuals with disabilities, the designated State unit has:
  - (1) written policies covering the nature and scope of each of the vocational rehabilitation services it provides and the criteria under which each service is provided; and
  - (2) information to ensure the proper and efficient administration of those services in the form and detail and at the time required by the Secretary, including:
    - (A) the types of services provided;
    - (B) the costs of those services; and
    - (C) to the extent feasible, estimates of the numbers of individuals benefiting from those services.

**5.6 Contracts and cooperative agreements.** (Section 101(a)(24) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.31 and .32)

**(a) Contracts with for-profit organizations.**

*The designated State agency has the authority to enter into contracts with for-profit organizations for the purpose of providing, as vocational rehabilitation services, on-the-job training and related programs for individuals with disabilities under part A of title VI of the Act, upon the determination by the designated State agency that such for-profit organizations are better qualified to provide such vocational rehabilitation services than non-profit agencies and organizations.*

**(b) Cooperative agreements with private non-profit organizations.**

*The manner in which the designated State agency establishes cooperative agreements with private non-profit vocational rehabilitation service providers is described in Attachment 4.9(c)(3).*

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**SECTION 6: ADMINISTRATION OF THE PROVISION OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES**

**6.1 Record of services.** (Section 101(a)(6)(A) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.47)

*The designated State unit maintains for each applicant or eligible individual a record of services that satisfies the requirements of 34 CFR 361.47.*

**6.2 Referrals and applications.** (Sections 101(a)(6)(A) and 102(a)(6) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.41)

- (a) *The designated State unit has standards for the prompt and equitable handling of referrals of individuals for vocational rehabilitation services. These standards include timelines for making good faith efforts to inform individuals of application requirements and to gather information necessary to initiate an assessment to determine eligibility and priority of services.*
- (b) *Once an individual has submitted an application for vocational rehabilitation services, an eligibility determination is made within a reasonable period of time, not to exceed 60 days, unless:*
  - (1) *exceptional and unforeseen circumstances beyond the control of the designated State unit preclude making an eligibility determination within 60 days and the designated State unit and the individual agree to a specific extension of time; or*
  - (2) *the designated State unit is exploring an individual's abilities, capabilities, and capacities to perform in work situations under section 102(a)(2)(B) of the Act.*

**6.3 Information and referral services.** (Section 101(a)(20) of the Act)

*The designated State agency has implemented an information and referral system that is adequate to ensure that individuals with disabilities are provided accurate vocational rehabilitation information and guidance, using appropriate modes of communication, to assist such individuals in preparing for, securing, retaining, or regaining employment, and are appropriately referred to Federal and State programs, including other components of the statewide workforce investment system in the State.*

**6.4 Ability to serve all eligible individuals; order of selection for services.** (Sections 12(d) and 101(a)(5) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.36)

- (a) *The designated State unit is able to provide the full range of services listed in section 103(a) of the Act and subsection 5.1 of this State plan, as appropriate, to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State who apply for services.*

**Yes**\_\_\_ **No** **X**

- (b) **IF YES**, Attachment 4.12(c)(2)(B) contains an explanation that satisfies the requirements of 34 CFR 361.36(a)(2) or (3) and describes how, on the basis of the designated State unit's projected fiscal and personnel resources and its assessment of the rehabilitation needs of individuals with significant disabilities within the State, it will:

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- (1) *continue to provide services to all individuals currently receiving services;*
- (2) *provide assessment services to all individuals expected to apply for services in the next fiscal year;*
- (3) *provide services to all individuals who are expected to be determined eligible in the next fiscal year; and*
- (4) *meet all program requirements.*

(c) **IF NO:**

- (1) *Individuals with the most significant disabilities are selected for vocational rehabilitation services before other individuals with disabilities.*
- (2) ***Attachment 4.12(c)(2)(A) contains:***
  - (A) *the order to be followed in selecting eligible individuals to be provided vocational rehabilitation services; and*
  - (B) *a justification for the order of selection.*
- (3) *Eligible individuals who do not meet the order of selection criteria are provided access to the services provided through the designated State unit's information and referral system implemented under section 101(a)(20) of the Act and subsection 6.3 of this State plan.*

**6.5 Assessment for determining eligibility and priority for services.** (Sections 7(2)(A)(i) and (D), 7(20)(A), 101(a)(12) and 102(a)(1)(A), (2)(B) and (4) of the Act)

- (a) *To determine whether an individual is eligible for vocational rehabilitation services and the individual's priority under an order of selection for services, if the State is operating under an order of selection, the designated State unit, to the maximum extent possible consistent with the requirements of this State plan, uses existing and current information, including information available from other programs and providers, particularly information provided by education officials and the Social Security Administration, and information provided by the applicant and the family of the applicant.*
- (b) *To the extent that existing information is unavailable or insufficient, the designated State unit provides appropriate assessment activities to obtain necessary additional information to make the determination regarding the applicant's eligibility, and, if applicable, the applicant's priority under an order of selection.*
- (c) *The State unit's determination of an applicant's eligibility for vocational rehabilitation services is based only on the following requirements.*
  - (1) *A determination that the applicant has a physical or mental impairment.*

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- (2) *A determination that the applicant's physical or mental impairment constitutes or results in a substantial impediment to employment.*
- (3) *A presumption, in accordance with section 102(a)(2)(A) of the Act and paragraph (d) of this subsection of the State plan, that the applicant can benefit in terms of an employment outcome from the provision of vocational rehabilitation services.*
- (4) *A determination that the applicant requires vocational rehabilitation services to prepare for, secure, retain, or regain employment.*
- (d) *The designated State unit presumes that an applicant who meets the eligibility requirements in subparagraphs (c)(1) and (c)(2) of this subsection of this State plan can benefit in terms of an employment outcome unless the designated State unit can demonstrate by clear and convincing evidence that the applicant is incapable of benefiting in terms of an employment outcome from vocational rehabilitation services due to the severity of the individual's disability. In making such a demonstration, the designated State unit first explores the individual's abilities, capabilities, and capacity to perform in work situations through the use of trial work experiences consistent with the provisions of sections 7(2)(D) and 102(a)(2)(B) of the Act.*
- (e) *If there is appropriate evidence that establishes the applicant's eligibility for Social Security benefits under Title II or Title XVI of the Social Security Act, the designated State unit:*
  - (1) *presumes the applicant to be eligible for vocational rehabilitation services under this State plan (provided that the individual intends to achieve an employment outcome consistent with the unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice of the individual) unless the designated State unit can demonstrate by clear and convincing evidence that the applicant is incapable of benefiting in terms of an employment outcome from vocational rehabilitation services due to the severity of the disability of the individual in accordance with the provisions of section 102(a)(2) of the Act and paragraph 6.5(d) of this State plan; and*
  - (2) *considers the applicant to be an individual with a significant disability consistent with the provisions of section 7(21)(A) of the Act.*
- (f) *In the application of the eligibility criteria, the following requirements are met.*
  - (1) *No duration of residence requirement is imposed that excludes from services under the plan any individual who is present in the State.*
  - (2) *No applicant or group of applicants is excluded or found ineligible solely on the basis of the type of disability.*
  - (3) *The eligibility requirements are applied without regard to the age, gender, race, color, creed, or national origin of the applicant.*

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- (4) *The eligibility requirements are applied without regard to the particular service needs or anticipated cost of services required by an applicant or the income level of an applicant or applicant's family.*

**6.6 *Procedures for ineligibility determination.*** (Section 102(a)(5) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.43)

*If the State unit determines that an applicant is ineligible for vocational rehabilitation services or determines that an individual receiving services under an individualized plan for employment is no longer eligible for services, the State unit:*

- (a) *makes the determination only after providing an opportunity for full consultation with the individual or, as appropriate, with the individual's representative;*
- (b) *informs the individual or, as appropriate, the individual's representative, in writing, supplemented as necessary by other appropriate modes of communication consistent with the informed choice of the individual, of the ineligibility determination, including:*
  - (1) *the reasons for the determination; and*
  - (2) *the description of the means by which the individual may express, and seek remedy for, any dissatisfaction with the determination, including the procedures for the review by an impartial hearing officer consistent with the provisions of section 102(c) of the Act and subsection 4.16 of this State plan;*
- (c) *provides the individual with a description of services available from the client assistance program and information on how to contact that program; and*
- (d) *reviews any ineligibility determination that is based on a finding that the individual is incapable of benefiting in terms of an employment outcome from the provision of vocational rehabilitation services within 12 months and annually thereafter, if such a review is requested by the individual or, if appropriate, by the individual's representative, except when the:*
  - (1) *individual has refused the review;*
  - (2) *individual is no longer present in the State;*
  - (3) *individual's whereabouts are unknown; or*
  - (4) *individual's medical condition is rapidly progressive or terminal.*

**6.7 *Closure without ineligibility determination.*** (Sections 12(c) and 101(a)(6)(A) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.44)

*The State unit does not administratively close an applicant's record of services prior to making an eligibility determination unless the:*

- (a) *applicant declines to participate in, or is unavailable to complete an assessment for determining eligibility and priority for services; and*

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- (b) *State unit has made a reasonable number of attempts to contact the applicant or, if appropriate, the applicant's representative to encourage the applicant's participation.*

**6.8 Availability of comparable services and benefits.** (Sections 101(a)(8) and 103(a) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.53)

- (a) *Prior to providing any vocational rehabilitation services, except those services identified in paragraph (d) of this subsection, to an eligible individual, or to members of the individual's family, the State unit determines whether comparable services and benefits exist under any other program and whether those services and benefits are available to the individual.*
- (b) *If comparable services or benefits exist under any other program and are available to the eligible individual at the time needed to achieve the provisions of the individual's individualized plan for employment, the State unit uses those comparable services or benefits to meet, in whole or in part, the cost of vocational rehabilitation services.*
- (c) *If comparable services or benefits exist under any other program, but are not available to the individual at the time needed to satisfy the provisions of the individual's individualized plan for employment, the State unit provides vocational rehabilitation services until those comparable services and benefits become available.*
- (d) *The following services are exempt from a determination of the availability of comparable services and benefits:*
  - (1) *assessment for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs by qualified personnel, including, if appropriate, an assessment by personnel skilled in rehabilitation technology;*
  - (2) *counseling and guidance, including information and support services to assist an individual in exercising informed choice consistent with the provisions of section 102(d) of the Act;*
  - (3) *referral and other services to secure needed services from other agencies through agreements developed under section 101(a)(11) of the Act, if such services are not available under this State plan;*
  - (4) *job-related services, including job search and placement assistance, job retention services, follow-up services, and follow-along services;*
  - (5) *rehabilitation technology, including telecommunications, sensory, and other technological aids and devices; and*
  - (6) *post-employment services consisting of the services listed under subparagraphs (1) through (5) of this paragraph.*

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- (e) *The requirements of paragraph (a) of this subsection also do not apply if the determination of the availability of comparable services and benefits under any other program would interrupt or delay:*
  - (1) *progress of the individual toward achieving the employment outcome identified in the individualized plan for employment;*
  - (2) *an immediate job placement; or*
  - (3) *provision of such service to any individual who is determined to be at extreme medical risk, based on medical evidence provided by an appropriate qualified medical professional.*
- (f) *The Governor of the State in consultation with the designated State vocational rehabilitation agency and other appropriate agencies ensures that there is an interagency agreement or other mechanism for interagency coordination that meets the requirements of section 101(a)(8)(B)(i)-(iv) of the Act between any appropriate public entity, including the State medicaid program, public institution of higher education, and a component of the statewide workforce investment system, and the designated State unit so as to ensure the provision of the vocational rehabilitation services identified in section 103(a) of the Act and subsection 5.1 of this State plan, other than the services identified in paragraph (d) of this subsection, that are included in the individualized plan for employment of an eligible individual, including the provision of such services during the pendency of any dispute that may arise in the implementation of the interagency agreement or other mechanism for interagency coordination.*

**6.9     *Participation of individuals in cost of services based on financial need.*** (Section 12(c) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.54)

- (a) *No financial needs test is applied and no financial participation is required as a condition for furnishing the following vocational rehabilitation services:*
  - (1) *assessment for determining eligibility and priority for services, except those non-assessment services that are provided during an exploration of the individual's abilities, capabilities, and capacity to perform in work situations, consistent with the requirements of sections 7(2)(D) and 102(a)(2)(B) of the Act;*
  - (2) *assessment for determining vocational rehabilitation needs;*
  - (3) *counseling and guidance, including information and support services to assist an individual in exercising informed choice;*
  - (4) *referral and other services to secure needed services from other agencies through cooperative agreements under section 101(a)(11) of the Act and subsection 4.9 of this State plan, if such services are not available under this State plan; and*
  - (5) *job-related services, including job search and placement assistance, job retention services, follow-up services, and follow-along services.*

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- (b) *The State unit considers the financial need of eligible individuals, or individuals who are receiving services during an exploration of an individual's abilities, capabilities, and capacity to perform in work situations consistent with subparagraph (1) of paragraph (a) of this subsection, in order to determine the extent of the individual's participation in the costs of vocational rehabilitation services.*

Yes X No

- (c) **IF YES:**

- (1) *The State unit has written policies on the determination of financial need that are consistent with the provisions of 34 CFR 361.54 and these policies:*
- (A) *are applied uniformly to all individuals in similar circumstances; and*
  - (B) *ensure that the level of the individual's participation in the cost of vocational rehabilitation services is:*
    - (i) *reasonable;*
    - (ii) *based on the individual's financial need, including the consideration of any disability-related expenses paid by the individual; and*
    - (iii) *not so high as to effectively deny the individual a necessary service.*
- (2) *Attachment 6.9(c)(2) specifies the services for which the designated State unit has a financial needs test.*

**6.10 Development of the individualized plan for employment.** (Sections 7(2)(B), 101(a)(9), and 102(b)(1) and (2) of the Act)

- (a) *The designated State unit conducts an assessment to determine the vocational rehabilitation needs for each eligible individual, including the need for supported employment services, or, if the State is operating under an order of selection, for each eligible individual to whom the State is able to provide services, for the purpose of identifying the provisions to be included in the individualized plan for employment that meets the requirements of section 102(b) of the Act.*
- (b) *The development of the individualized plan for employment meets the following procedural requirements.*
- (1) *The individualized plan for employment is developed and implemented in a timely manner subsequent to the determination of the eligibility of the individual for services under this State plan, except if the State is operating under an order of selection, the individualized plan for employment is developed and implemented only for individuals to whom the State is able to provide services.*

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- (2) *The designated State unit provides to the eligible individual or the individual's representative, in writing and in an appropriate mode of communication, information on the individual's options for the development of the individualized plan for employment, including:*
- (A) *information on the availability of assistance, to the extent determined appropriate by the eligible individual, from a qualified vocational rehabilitation counselor in developing all or part of the individualized plan for employment for the individual, and the availability of technical assistance in developing all or part of the individualized plan for employment for the individual;*
  - (B) *a description of the full range of components that must be included in an individualized plan for employment;*
  - (C) *as appropriate,*
    - (i) *an explanation of agency guidelines and criteria associated with financial commitments concerning an individualized plan for employment;*
    - (ii) *additional information the eligible individual requests or the designated State unit determines to be necessary; and*
    - (iii) *information on the availability of assistance in completing designated State agency forms required in developing an individualized plan for employment;*
  - (D) *a description of the rights and remedies available to the eligible individual, including, if appropriate, recourse to mediation and the impartial due process hearing consistent with the provisions of section 102(c) of the Act and subsection 4.16 of this State plan; and*
  - (E) *a description of the availability of the client assistance program and information about how to contact the program.*
- (3) *The individualized plan for employment is developed as a written document prepared on forms provided by the designated State unit and is developed and implemented in a manner that affords eligible individuals the opportunity to exercise informed choice in selecting an employment outcome, the specific vocational rehabilitation services to be provided under the plan, the entity that will provide the vocational rehabilitation services, the settings in which the services will be provided, the employment setting, and the methods used to procure the services consistent with the provisions of section 102(d) of the Act.*
- (4) *The individualized plan for employment is agreed to and signed by the eligible individual or, as appropriate, the individual's representative, and approved and signed by a qualified vocational rehabilitation counselor employed by the*

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*designated State unit with a copy of the individualized plan for employment provided to the individual or, as appropriate, to the individual's representative, in writing and, if appropriate, in the native language or mode of communication of the individual or, as appropriate, of the individual's representative.*

- (5) The individualized plan for employment is reviewed at least annually by a qualified vocational rehabilitation counselor and the eligible individual or, as appropriate, the individual's representative and amended, as necessary, by the individual or, as appropriate, the individual's representative, in collaboration with a representative of the designated State agency or a qualified vocational rehabilitation counselor, as determined to be appropriate by the individual.*

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- (6) *If there are substantive changes in the individualized plan for employment with respect to the employment outcome, the vocational rehabilitation services to be provided, or the providers of the services, such amendments to the individualized plan for employment do not take effect until agreed to and signed by the eligible individual or, as appropriate, the individual's representative, and by a qualified vocational rehabilitation counselor employed by the designated State unit.*

**6.11 Mandatory components of the individualized plan for employment.** (Sections 101(a)(9), 102(b)(3), and 625(b)(6)(C),(E), and (F) of the Act)

- (a) *Each individualized plan for employment includes, at a minimum, the following mandatory components describing the:*
  - (1) *specific employment outcome that is chosen by the eligible individual, consistent with the unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice of the eligible individual, and, to the maximum extent appropriate, results in employment in an integrated setting;*
  - (2) *specific rehabilitation services that are:*
    - (A) *needed to achieve the employment outcome, including, as appropriate, the provision of assistive technology devices and assistive technology services, and personal assistance services, including training in the management of such services; and*
    - (B) *provided in the most integrated setting that is appropriate for the service involved and is consistent with the informed choice of the eligible individual;*
  - (3) *timelines for the achievement of the employment outcome and for the initiation of services;*
  - (4) *entity chosen by the eligible individual or, as appropriate, the individual's representative, that will provide the vocational rehabilitation services, and the methods used to procure the services;*
  - (5) *criteria to evaluate progress toward achievement of the employment outcome;*
  - (6) *terms and conditions of the individualized plan for employment, including, as appropriate, information related to the:*
    - (A) *responsibilities of the designated State unit;*
    - (B) *responsibilities of the eligible individual, including those related to:*
      - (i) *the achievement of the employment outcome;*
      - (ii) *participation, if applicable, in the paying the costs of the plan; and*

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- (iii) *applying for and securing comparable benefits consistent with the requirements of section 101(a)(8) of the Act and subsection 6.8 of this State plan; and*
  - (C) *responsibilities of other entities as the result of arrangements made pursuant to comparable services or benefits requirements as identified in section 101(a)(8) of the Act and subsection 6.8 of this State plan; and*
- (7) *projected need for post-employment services, as determined to be necessary.*
- (b) *The individualized plan for employment for individuals with the most significant disabilities for whom an employment outcome in a supported employment setting has been determined to be appropriate also contains the identification of the:*
  - (1) *extended services needed by the eligible individual; and*
  - (2) *source of the extended services or, to the extent that the source of extended services cannot be identified at the time of the development of the individualized plan for employment, the basis for concluding that there is a reasonable expectation that extended services will become available.*

**6.12 Annual review of individuals in extended employment or other employment under special certificate provisions of the fair labor standards act of 1938.** (Section 101(a)(14) of the Act)

- (a) *The designated State unit:*
  - (1) *conducts an annual review and reevaluation of the status of each individual with a disability served under this State plan who has achieved an employment outcome either in an extended employment setting in a community rehabilitation program or any other employment under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act (29 U.S.C. 214(c)) for 2 years after the achievement of the outcome (and annually thereafter if requested by the individual or, if appropriate, the individual's representative), to determine the interests, priorities, and needs of the individual with respect to competitive employment or training for competitive employment; and*
  - (2) *makes maximum efforts, including the identification and provision of vocational rehabilitation services, reasonable accommodations, and other necessary support services, to assist the individuals described in subparagraph (a)(1) in engaging in competitive employment.*
- (b) *The individual with a disability, or, if appropriate, the individual's representative has input into the review and reevaluation, and acknowledges through sign-off that such review and reevaluation have been conducted.*

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**STATE PLAN SUPPLEMENT FOR THE STATE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROGRAM**

**SECTION 7: PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION**

**7.1 Designated state agency.** (Section 625(b)(1) of the Act; 34 CFR 363.11(a))

*The designated State agency for vocational rehabilitation services identified in subsection 1.2 of the title I State plan is the State agency designated to administer the State Supported Employment Services Program authorized under title VI, part B of the Act.*

**7.2 Statewide assessment of supported employment services needs.** (Section 625(b)(2) of the Act; 34 CFR 363.11(b))

*Attachment 4.12(a) describes the results of the comprehensive, statewide needs assessment conducted under section 101(a)(15)(a)(1) of the Act and subparagraph 4.12(a)(1) of the title I State plan with respect to the rehabilitation needs of individuals with significant disabilities and the need for supported employment services, including needs related to coordination.*

**7.3 Quality, scope, and extent of supported employment services.** (Section 625(b)(3) of the Act; 34 CFR 363.11(c) and .50(b)(2))

*Attachment 7.3 describes the quality, scope, and extent of supported employment services to be provided to individuals with the most significant disabilities who are eligible to receive supported employment services.*

**7.4 Goals and plans for distribution of title VI, part B funds.** (Section 625(b)(3) of the Act; 34 CFR 363.11(d) and .20)

*Attachment 4.12(c)(3) identifies the State's goals and plans with respect to the distribution of funds received under section 622 of the Act.*

**7.5 Evidence of collaboration with respect to supported employment services and extended services.** (Sections 625(b)(4) and (5) of the Act; 34 CFR 363.11(e))

*Attachment 4.9(c)(4) describes the efforts of the designated State agency to identify and make arrangements, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other State agencies and other appropriate entities to assist in the provision of supported employment services and other public or nonprofit agencies or organizations within the State, employers, natural supports, and other entities with respect to the provision of extended services.*

**7.6 Minority outreach.** (34 CFR 363.11(f))

*Attachment 4.12(d)(2) describes the designated State agency's outreach procedures for identifying and serving individuals with the most significant disabilities who are minorities.*

**7.7 Reports.** (Sections 625(b)(8) and 626 of the Act; 34 CFR 363.11(h) and .52)

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*The designated State agency submits reports in such form and in accordance with such procedures as the Secretary may require and collects the information required by section 101(a)(10) of the Act separately for individuals receiving supported employment services under part B of title VI and individuals receiving supported employment services under title I of the Act.*

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## **SECTION 8: FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION**

### **8.1     *Five percent limitation on administrative costs.* (Section 625(b)(7) of the Act; 34 CFR 363.11(g)(8))**

*The designated State agency expends no more than five percent of the State's allotment under section 622 of the Act for administrative costs in carrying out the State Supported Employment Services Program.*

### **8.2     *Use of funds in providing services.* (Sections 623 and 625(b)(6)(A) and (D) of the Act; 34 CFR 363.6(c)(2)(iv), .11(g)(1) and (4))**

- (a)**     *Funds made available under title VI, part B of the Act are used by the designated State agency only to provide supported employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities who are eligible to receive such services.*
- (b)**     *Funds provided under title VI, part B are used only to supplement, and not supplant, the funds provided under title I of the Act, in providing supported employment services specified in the individualized plan for employment.*
- (c)**     *Funds provided under part B of title VI or title I of the Act are not used to provide extended services to individuals who are eligible under part B of title VI or title I of the Act.*

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## **SECTION 9: PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES**

### **9.1 Scope of supported employment services.** (Sections 7(36) and 625(b)(6)(F) and (G) of the Act; 34 CFR 363.11(g)(6) and (7))

- (a) *Supported employment services are those services as defined in section 7(36) of the Act.*
- (b) *To the extent job skills training is provided, the training is provided on-site.*
- (c) *Supported employment services include placement in an integrated setting for the maximum number of hours possible based on the unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice of individuals with the most significant disabilities.*

### **9.2 Comprehensive assessments of individuals with significant disabilities.** (Section 625(b)(6)(B); 34 CFR 363.11(g)(2))

*The comprehensive assessment of individuals with significant disabilities, including the assessment of rehabilitation, career, and employment needs, conducted under section 102(b)(1)(A) of the Act and paragraph 6.10(a) of this State plan and funded under title I of the Act includes consideration of supported employment as an appropriate employment outcome.*

### **9.3 Individualized plan for employment.** (Sections 102(b)(3)(F) and 625(b)(6)(C) and (E) of the Act; 34 CFR 363.11(g)(3) and (5))

- (a) *An individualized plan for employment that meets the requirements of section 102(b) of the Act and subsections 6.10 and .11 of this State plan is developed and updated using funds under Title I.*
- (b) *The individualized plan for employment:*
  - (1) *specifies the supported employment services to be provided;*
  - (2) *describes the expected extended services needed; and*
  - (3) *identifies the source of extended services, including natural supports, or, to the extent that it is not possible to identify the source of extended services at the time the individualized plan for employment plan is developed, a statement describing the basis for concluding that there is a reasonable expectation that sources will become available.*
- (c) *Services provided under an individualized plan for employment are coordinated with services provided under other individualized plans established under other Federal or State programs.*

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### **ATTACHMENTS REQUIRED OF ALL AGENCIES**

- Attachment 4.9(c):** *Cooperation and Coordination with Other Agencies and Other Entities*
- (1) *Cooperation with Agencies That Are Not in the Statewide Workforce Investment System and with Other Entities*
  - (2) *Coordination with Education Officials*
  - (3) *Cooperative Agreements with Private Non-profit Vocational Rehabilitation Service Providers*
  - (4) *Evidence of Collaboration Regarding Supported Employment Services and Extended Services*
- Attachment 4.11(b):** *Comprehensive System of Personnel Development*
- Attachment 4.12** *Assessments; Estimates; Goals and Priorities; Strategies; and Progress Reports*
- (a): *Results of Comprehensive Statewide Assessment of the Rehabilitation Needs of Individuals with Disabilities and Need to Establish, Develop, or Improve Community Rehabilitation Programs*
  - (b): *Annual Estimates of Individuals to Be Served and Costs of Services*
  - (c)(1): *State's Goals and Priorities*
  - (c)(3): *Goals and Plans for Distribution of Title VI, Part B Funds*
  - (d): *State's Strategies and Use of Title I Funds for Innovation and Expansion Activities*
    - (1) *To Address Needs Identified in the Comprehensive Assessment and to Achieve Identified Goals and Priorities*
    - (2) *To Carryout Outreach Activities to Identify and Serve Individuals with the Most Significant Disabilities Who are Minorities*
    - (3) *To Overcome Identified Barriers Relating to Equitable Access to and Participation of Individuals with Disabilities in the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program and the State Supported Employment Services Program.*
  - (e): *Evaluation and Report of Progress in Achieving Identified Goals and Priorities and Use Of Title I Funds for Innovation and Expansion Activities*
- Attachment 4.16(b)(2):** *Mediation and Impartial Due Process Hearing Procedures*
- Attachment 7.3:** *Quality, Scope, and Extent of Supported Employment Services*

### **ATTACHMENTS CONTINGENT ON OPTIONS SELECTED**

*The following attachments identified by an "X" are also submitted as part of the State plan.*

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- X** **Attachment 4.2(c):** *Summary of Input and Recommendations of the State Rehabilitation Council; Response of the Designated State Unit; and Explanations for Rejection of Input or Recommendations*
- Attachment 4.5:** *Local Administration*
- X** **Attachment 4.6(a)(3):** *Request for Waiver of Statewideness*
- Attachment 4.7(b):** *Shared Funding and Administration of Joint Program*
- X** **Attachment 4.12(c)(2)(A):** *Order of Selection*
- Attachment 4.12(c)(2)(B):** *Explanation to Support the Decision Not to Establish an Order of Selection*
- X** **Attachment 6.9(c)(2):** *Services Subject to Financial Needs Test*

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## **Summary of Input and Recommendations of the State Rehabilitation Council; Response of the Designated State Unit; and Explanations for Rejection of Input or Recommendations For 2005 -2006**

The ARSA commends the Council for their efforts to obtain input from consumers around the State. Use of the internet and a web based survey created opportunities for a lot more people to comment than in prior years. RSA will do its utmost to honor the people who responded by addressing and dealing with their concerns.

### ***Qualified Staff***

- 1. RSA should expand counselor training to enhance vocational counseling skills such as job readiness assessment, transferable and marketable skills analysis, and preparing consumers for job searches (resume writing, interviewing skills, researching labor market).**

#### **AGENCY RESPONSE:**

ARSA is currently focusing on just such training. Three trainings have been calendared in Phoenix (May 25<sup>th</sup>), Tucson (June 21<sup>st</sup>), Flagstaff (July 12<sup>th</sup>) and another is planned for the Fall. The training will encompass a discussion of what is included in vocational counseling, how we use transferable skills, how we assist consumers in choosing vocational goals, and why labor market surveys are important. In addition, the afternoon session will be a tool box of ideas regarding resumes, cover letters, interview questions, practice job applications, thank you letters and more.

The number one (#1) strategic goal for ARSA is, and has been, to hire and fairly reimburse qualified vocational rehabilitation counselors. ARSA wants to hire and develop counselors who are knowledgeable about human behavior, motivations, and communication styles; who understand a wide range of disabilities and their impact on people; who understand the principles and science of rehabilitation (including resources, terminology, technology, etc.); who understand the needs and demands of the labor market; who have excellent communication skills and understand the principles of good “relationship management”; and who are able to put all of this knowledge and skills together to assist individuals with disabilities who desire to become economically self-sufficient through meaningful and sustained work. Specific training in the “vocational” part of vocational counseling will give staff the needed tools. AxRSA plans to continue to do such training for new staff.

With its goal to take some of the administrative and coding burdens away from its counselors (Tech Offices), ARSA intends to replace these tasks with an increased focus on vocational counseling, job readiness assessments, transferable and marketable skills analyses, and preparing consumers to make good employment decisions with the help of labor market research and informational interviewing. This focus and these counseling skills are essential complements to the new performance-based contracts for the provision of job placement, job retention and supported employment services.

- 2. RSA should continue specific disability training in the following areas:**
  - Traumatic Brain Injury**

- **Acquired Brain Injury**
- **Serious Mental Illness**
- **Cognitive Disabilities**

#### AGENCY RESPONSE

ARSA has been providing extensive training on specific disabilities this past year, especially in these areas. It may well be that this input is a result of these trainings and the increased interest and concerns these trainings have created. RSA plans to continue emphasis in these areas and to make sure that all RSA staff have access to these trainings.

TBI/ABI: During the past four months, there have been three one-day trainings in the area of TBI for counselors and providers who work with individuals with serious mental illness, a one-day training on TBI for counselors who work with adolescents and a two day training on TBI for counselors with general caseloads. These trainings also covered aspects of Acquired Brain Injury. The Governor's Council on Head and Spinal Cord Injuries has provided money and staff for training on traumatic brain injury (TBI) and has established a resource library on spinal cord and traumatic brain injuries. TBI 101 for General VR Counselors (Introduction to Traumatic Brain Injury) was presented on April 7-8, 2005. The training included a general overview of TBI, impact of TBI, client scenarios, a panel presentation from TBI specialists, and the neuropsychological assessment. Susan Wolf, Ph.D., Don Nockelby, Ph.D. and staff from the Head and Spinal Cord Injury Council were among the presenters.

SMI: During this fiscal year, numerous trainings were held and are planned for counselors and community providers who work with individuals with serious mental illness. They include:

- a. Statewide one-day training on "Train the Trainer" skills so agencies could send key staff who would bring the information back to the remaining staff.
- b. Three one-day trainings on "Creating Employment Opportunities". These were held in Tucson, Phoenix, and Flagstaff.
- c. Three one-day trainings on "Job Coaching for Persons with Serious Mental Illness". These were held in Phoenix, Tucson and Camp Verde.
- d. A two-day training is planned for June 2005. It will include motivational interviewing, the role of diet and nutrition in reducing stress and preventing burnout, case staffings and system integration.
- e. A training on "Learning Disabilities for Individuals with Serious Mental Illness" will take place in late June 2005.

RSA works closely with the RBHAs, and specialty counselors working with the SMI population are consulted to provide skill building and continuing education. Training is planned as a result of VR counselor needs, using regional vocational plans for the SMI population. One of RSA's trainers arranges specific trainings statewide for counselors who work with the SMI population. Beth Stoneking, U of A, is an expert on SMI issues and has provided training to VR counselors. Funding is provided in the training budget to enable staff to participate in out-service training workshops and conferences. Included in the ARSA training plan is a separate training plan for services to individuals with chronic and severe mental illness under an Interagency Service Agreement with ADHS/Behavioral Health Services. Establishment grants for training and preparing peer mentors (DIRECT in Tucson and NARBHA in Flagstaff) were approved for SMI clients.

LD: A training on learning disabilities was held in January 2005. In addition, a training on supported employment was held in March 2005. Numerous trainings were done regarding the Interagency Governmental Agreement with RSA, DDD and ADE. These trainings took place around the state.

School-to-work transition counselors serve a great percentage of learning disabled students that are currently enrolled in high school. They have had extensive training opportunities and work with school personnel in dealing with students who have learning disabilities.

**3. RSA should continually educate and update staff on their roles and responsibilities within vocational rehabilitation.**

**AGENCY RESPONSE**

It is the intention of ARSA to continue to educate and update staff on their roles and responsibilities within Vocational Rehabilitation, especially in the following areas.

ARSA has developed and communicated major documents developed over the last several years which speak to this recommendation. These documents are intended to be used a basic platform and basis for all other training provided to staff.

Administrative Information Memorandum (AIM) 03-1 transmits “Professional Standards for All ARSA Staff”. It contains a set of rules of professionalism that applies to all ARSA staff. Supervisors have shared the standards with all existing staff and make sure that every new staff person that is hired receives a copy and instructions. Signatures are provided for at the end of the document so that staff can acknowledge having read those standards and to indicate their agreement to abide by them.

Administrative Information Memorandum (AIM) 04-4 contains a set of documents which includes ARSA’s Mission and Vision Statements for the Vocational Rehabilitation program, a discussion of relationship management, and basic principles guiding our relationship with clients. These represent ARSA’s understanding of the Federal requirement that clients are to be full and active partners in their own rehabilitation, including making informed choices. These statements are the foundation of the VR Program’s 2001-2005 Strategic Plan.

An ongoing concept in training staff is that a precondition for VR success is a commitment on the part of the counselor *and* the client is essential to achieve a meaningful employment outcome (i.e. one that maximizes abilities and strengths, creates economic independence to the extent possible, reduces or eliminates dependence on government income supports, and which can be sustained over time).

Counselors are also instructed to assist clients to have maximum control and responsibility over their own lives. This, in part, means providing ways and opportunities for clients to receive total information and to become full and active participation in all decisions that are made.

ARSA has been working to provide counselors with support systems and tools to do their jobs. Local office supervisors have been encouraged to sit in on client interviews with new counselors to be sure that staff understand how to implement the key concepts of negotiation and knowledge.

Counselors are encouraged to involve everyone who has a significant role to play in the client's plan, including the client, in staffings. The attitude, confidence, knowledge, negotiation and tone that are keys to the counselor/client relationship are also the keys to the relationship between the supervisors and counselors. The ability for staff to negotiate within their respective relationships (counselor to supervisor, supervisor to manager) is most important.

The new "Tech Offices" demonstrate a significant change in VR's relationship and attitude towards the clients by giving clients more than one contact point with the local office, as offices begin to work more as teams on behalf of clients.

**4. RSA should address a consumer's individual employment needs by utilizing the full continuum of service options.**

**AGENCY RESPONSE**

One of the important principles in Vocational Rehabilitation is to ensure that the client has a good foundation on which to build a successful vocational future. A good foundation includes: being comfortable with and successfully managing one's own disability, having basic living skills (in areas of communication, mobility, home/personal management, etc.) and being confident in the use of these skills, understanding the meaning and impact of work on benefits and disability, and knowing how to access and use resources available in the community. A client should not be required to make a specific vocational choice before s/he is ready to make such a choice.

The VR program is not solely or primarily responsible for building such a foundation. The school system, as well as other systems (such as the BHS and DDD, family, etc.), all play a role. However, the VR counselor needs to identify deficiencies in these areas and to facilitate remediation either in cooperation with these other systems and/or accept responsibility to build such a foundation using VR resources.

The client's choice of a vocational goal, services, and service providers will be honored when that choice is made within the parameters of policy which have been accurately and effectively communicated.

Decisions about what goods and/or services are available to an eligible client are based on: service policies; the vocational goal and the needs of the individual to help him/her to reach that goal; comparable benefits; economic need policies.

Factors affecting the choice of providers include provider qualifications, accreditation, a competitive procurement process, use of a contract versus individual procurement, and provider acceptance of ARSA fee schedule rates.

**5. RSA should work towards reducing staff turn-over by increasing salaries, job satisfaction and strengthening the quality of work performed by staff.**

**AGENCY RESPONSE:**

Retention of staff is and has been a significant problem for ARSA. It was the first priority in a list of five major goals in ARSA's Strategic Plan, beginning five years ago. Much progress has been achieved in terms of dealing with issues of recruitment, qualifications, and pay - but clearly not enough. The problem has not gone away.

One method to recruit people to this profession is to make pay and work conditions attractive. ARSA is working with DES Personnel to assist in the recruitment and retention of staff who meet the “qualified” CSPD standard. These strategies include a proposal to pay current staff who meet the standards an additional 5% or the mid-range of the salary scale, whichever is higher. Individuals who are employed will get the same incentive when they meet the standard. New hires that are “qualified” would be brought in at mid-range of the salary scale. Approval of that proposal is pending.

This year’s Attachment to the State Plan dealing with “Procedures and Activities regarding the Establishment and Maintenance of a Comprehensive System of Personnel Development [or CSPD] (Attachment 4.11(b))”, describes exhaustively ARSA’s current activities in this regard and its plans for the future. It is hoped that this effort will assist both in recruiting and in retaining staff. The cooperation and support of DES, State Personnel, the Arizona Legislature, and the Governor’s Office are all necessary to deal with the core issues of salaries and benefits.

The ARSA has also been addressing the complexity of the counselor’s job as part of the agency’s five-year Strategic Plan. Two foci are: (a) the simplification of the MIS system (IRIS) and (b) the expansion of the original pilot offices into “Tech” offices. These address changes in processes, work roles and other issues.

The simplification of the MIS system is an ongoing process. Recent decisions have been made to do as much work as possible off-line, using paper forms that are easy to understand. Work groups have developed streamlined forms, including an updated Individual Plan for Employment (IPE). The ARSA policy manual is being updated and simplified. It will be available on-line through the Intranet, along with forms and a wealth of other information used by counselors.

The expansion of the Tech Office implementation, which has been delayed due to hiring freezes and budget issues, began in 2004. Staff recruitment and hiring was completed in early 2005, and 17 offices received training and support as they implemented the changes, effective April 1, 2005. It is expected that the remainder of the ARSA offices will have implemented the change by September 2005. A manual has been written for use by the new Payment and Procurement Technicians.

## **6. RSA should strive to foster accountability at every staff level.**

### **AGENCY RESPONSE**

The ARSA agrees. Accountability means different things for each level of responsibility. An important tool is the performance evaluation system called ESTEEM. All staff receive training on ESTEEM. The ESTEEM includes individualized, measurable performance standards, an on-going communication requirement and a professional development plan. The ESTEEM also has a system for employees to provide feedback on supervisors. There are provisions for a system of performance improvement when staff do not perform up to standard. Human Resource Section staff provide technical assistance to supervisors when they have staff who need to improve performance, and special individual performance training plans are developed, as appropriate.

For counselors, the ARSA sets standards for quality as well as productivity, including writing plans and achieving specified numbers of successful closures.

The new “Tech” offices provide clear divisions of labor and accountability for purchasing and payment technicians. As duties change in a local office, it becomes necessary to clarify and define

everyone's roles. This is the case in the new Tech offices and will be for other offices as they become Tech offices. ARSA continues to work through problems and solutions. A commitment from all staff in the offices to work as a team will create accountability to our clients and assist clients in gaining a sense of control and responsibility for their own rehabilitation and of full and active participants in their own rehabilitation.

Accountability of supervisors is closely linked to the performance of the offices they supervise. Accountability of regional managers is twofold. Regional managers are accountable for the performance of their region in terms of achieving regional goals. They are also accountable for how well they perform management functions such as management of client service monies, contract management and oversights, community relationships and relations with RSA partners, etc.

The RSA Central Office shares in many of these same responsibilities. They are accountable to field operations (for support systems, structures, guidance), to the Department (for achieving DES strategic goals), to all persons with disabilities around the State (for equitable distribution of resources and services), to the State Rehabilitation Council (which has responsibilities to advise and oversee the VR program) and ultimately to the Federal government (which administers the Federal grant and monitors States' performance using the Federal standards and indicators and program audits).

A concern of the State Rehabilitation Council is that frontline personnel such as receptionists and secretaries are also sensitive and knowledgeable about the needs and concerns of the clients of the program. ARSA is aware of this need and continues to provide basic training on an annual basis and to encourage local office supervisors to be aware of this need and to provide the necessary support and on-the-job training to such staff.

### ***Policy Issues***

#### **7. RSA should review its economic need policies regarding disability-related expenses and who in the VR client's family is counted.**

##### **AGENCY RESPONSE**

The ARSA is in the process of reviewing its economic need policies to be more responsive to the needs of clients who must use a large portion of their incomes to pay for disability-related costs.

Current policy has used Arizona's median income levels rather than poverty levels to provide a cushion for clients with disability-related needs. This system has been easy to administer, but does not accommodate sufficiently for individuals with good incomes and significant amounts of disability-related expenses.

As a result of input from the Client Assistance Program and from our clients, RSA is exploring other ways to have a fair system that is easy to administer and yet is more finely nuanced. New policies will be incorporated in the new VR Policy Manual, which will be completed before the end of this year.

## *Service Delivery*

### **8. RSA should continue to expand service resources in rural communities.**

#### **AGENCY RESPONSE:**

In last year's solicitation of establishment grant proposals, the expansion of service resources in rural communities was one of the critical areas for which ARSA solicited proposals. In order to achieve this goal, ARSA funded proposals to several rural area service providers. Establishment grant funding created:

- A position for a Disability Navigator in the Gila County One-Stop to increase capacity for community employment of persons with disabilities.
- A large disability focus in the Santa Cruz County One-Stop and created transportation capability for individuals with disabilities.
- Transportation for individuals with disabilities in and around Page, Arizona, to include the western part of the Navajo Reservation, to go to school and/or work.
- Increased capability for the Douglas ARC to compete for state set-aside projects and increase employment opportunities for individuals with the most significant disabilities. (janitorial and groundskeeper jobs)
- Increased capability for the Graham County ARC to compete for state set-aside projects and increase employment opportunities for individuals with the most significant disabilities.
- Capacity for the Pinal Hispanic Council to offer employment and employment support opportunities to individuals with serious mental illness.
- Capacity for SEABHS to provide sensitivity and best practice training, regarding persons with SMI, to law enforcement and emergency medical personnel in Southeastern Arizona.
- A consumer-run business (Tailgate Café) on the White Mountain Apache Reservation at White River.
- Expansion of two consumer-run businesses (upholstery and bicycle repair) in the Winslow area to allow for additional employment and training opportunities for individuals with serious mental illness.
- An on-line training program for assistive technology that targets rural areas statewide.

When considering additional grants in the future, RSA will continue to look for opportunities to develop resources in rural Arizona.

### **9. RSA should evaluate the effectiveness of partnership agreements.**

#### **AGENCY RESPONSE**

ARSA has a significant number of partnership agreements. These agreements are entered into out of necessity in order to utilize the available federal grant monies. Every effort is made to use the monies wisely and effectively.

The ARSA has renegotiated its Interagency Agreement (IA) with the Department of Education, Exceptional Student Services. This IA now incorporates a third partner, the Division of Developmental Disabilities. Work has also started to incorporate the Department of Health Services as an additional partner. This IA sets the basic vision and parameters for school-to-work transition efforts. It is important that the most critical agencies are all represented. This agreement sets a baseline for transition services that must be available for all students in

transition. ARSA continues to press its supervisors to assign staff to make contacts with and to work with all of the high schools around the state. The Interagency Agreement also provides a framework for developing partnerships which generate additional match monies and allows the ARSA to increase the level of transition services with many school districts throughout the state.

ARSA continues to also have strong liaisons and cooperative programming with a great number of other organizations and partners including: JOBS Administration to assist disabled recipients of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP) providers, (Section 121) Tribal VR programs, Universities and Colleges (especially their DSRs), Arizona Postsecondary Access Coalition (AZPAC), Arizona Technology Assistance Project (AzTAP), ADHS/Behavioral Health Services, Department of Juvenile Corrections and County probation departments, the Workforce Investment System (Statewide and local boards), cities (Phoenix ClearPath), the Industrial Commission of Arizona (ICA), Governor's Councils (DD, SILC, SRC, GCSHI, GCBVI), Arizona Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ACDHH), et al.

Each partnership agreement contains its own accountability and outcome measures. Evaluating the effectiveness of each partnership is a joint responsibility of both RSA and the individual partner(s). Many of the partnerships involve working with very challenging client populations. Employment outcomes and success ratios are set as appropriate for each population to be served.

**10. RSA should evaluate the effectiveness and measure the sustainability of Establishment Grants.**

**AGENCY RESPONSE**

All Establishment Grants have both a contract manager and a program lead person assigned to them to make sure that both contractual and programmatic concerns are dealt with. RSA has just completed the first year of a three to four year Establishment Grant award cycle. The first years of establishment grants are devoted to getting the projects and programs started. It is during the second and subsequent years that the focus shifts to thinking about how what has been created can be sustained into the future. Staff assigned to these grants have been advised to begin working with grantees on sustainability. In some cases, sustainability is dependent on a continuing contract relationship with RSA. In other instances, sustainability is based on the grantee selling goods or services to the public and creating a large enough revenue stream to continue.

ARSA invites the SRC to continue to monitor this issue and to work with ARSA to make sure that these grants turn into viable and ongoing programs which benefit persons with disabilities and clients of the Vocational Rehabilitation program.

***Marketing***

**11. RSA should work towards creating a more positive image to potential consumers including, but not limited to, the RSA website and published communication materials.**

**AGENCY RESPONSE:**

ARSA appreciates the input of SRC. Because of this input, ARSA plans to closely look at its website and ways to project a more positive image. ARSA appreciates this feedback and concurs that its programs should be marketed in a positive and appealing way that encourages and invites persons with disabilities to approach RSA programs and see them as opportunities to achieve their independent living and vocational aspirations. ARSA plans to project a more positive and inviting approach to prospective clients and throughout the rehabilitation process.

**12. RSA should continue to build relationships with employers, the community, and service providers to promote greater employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities.**

**AGENCY RESPONSE:**

The ARSA has various initiatives to build relationships with employers, the community, and service providers to promote greater employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

The Employment Disability Resource Network (EDRN) continues its excellent cooperative work of connecting employers with members of the network [ARSA/VR, Employment Administration, Arizona Business Leadership Network (AZBLN) and Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRP)]. EDRN has made great strides in getting ARSA name recognition out to community employers.

Arizona is also involved with NETPA (Networking Employment and Training Professional Association), a network of human service providers to accelerate job placement and bridge the gap between employers and qualified applicants.

In the last few years, ARSA has made sure to have a table and a recognizable presence at all employer job fairs we know about and other employment related gatherings.

ARSA continues its effort to outstation VR counselors and staff at One Stop Centers with Disability Program Navigators (DPN) to outreach and serve consumers with disabilities and to gain recognition within the community.

Much of the VR program's contact with employers is through proxies; i.e. community rehabilitation program providers and other for-profit contractors who do job development and placement for VR clients. In our meetings, ARSA has stressed to contractors that they must identify RSA/VR when placing our clients. This has had limited success and continues to be an on-going challenge for ARSA.

ARSA regional offices continue to have employer recognition days or other activities to bring some recognition and acknowledgment of ARSA's role in helping persons with disabilities gain employment. SRC has had a large role in initiating some of these efforts, and we look to the SRC to continue assisting ARSA in gaining recognition and awareness in local communities.

Finally, ARSA is currently engaged in a major effort to construct a performance-based contracting approach for employment related services. ARSA has two strategic goals for the creation of the new RFP:

- (1) to increase the success rate and the quality of jobs obtained by VR consumers who make

- use of this service;
- (2) to make successful outcomes and the quality of these outcomes be the key elements in both the compensation and evaluation portions of the contracts, while ensuring that:
    - (a) there is a fair methodology and compensation structure to enable providers of this service to develop and deliver a high quality product;
    - (b) this service is available to the broad spectrum of persons with disabilities served by ARSA;
    - (c) community employers are satisfied with services received and actively participate in the recruitment and placement of persons with disabilities into quality jobs.

## 4.6(a)(3) Waiver of Statewideness

### Sec. 361.26 Waiver of statewideness.

#### **(a) Availability.**

*The State unit may provide services in one or more political subdivisions of the State that increase services or expand the scope of services that are available statewide under the State plan if--*

- (1) The non-Federal share of the cost of these services is met from funds provided by a local public agency, including funds contributed to a local public agency by a private agency, organization, or individual;*
- (2) The services are likely to promote the vocational rehabilitation of substantially larger numbers of individuals with disabilities or of individuals with disabilities with particular types of impairments; and*
- (3) For purposes other than those specified in Sec. 361.60(b)(3)(i) and consistent with the requirements in Sec. 361.60(b)(3)(ii), the State includes in its State plan, and the Secretary approves, a waiver of the statewideness requirement, in accordance with the requirements of paragraph (b) of this section.*

#### **(b) Request for waiver.**

*The request for a waiver of statewideness must--*

- (1) Identify the types of services to be provided;*
- (2) Contain a written assurance from the local public agency that it will make available to the State unit the non-Federal share of funds;*
- (3) Contain a written assurance that State unit approval will be obtained for each proposed service before it is put into effect; and*
- (4) Contain a written assurance that all other State plan requirements, including a State's order of selection requirements, will apply to all services approved under the waiver.*

*“(Approved by the Office of Management and Budget under control number 1820-0500)”.*

*(Authority: Section 101(a)(4) of the Act; 29 U.S.C. 721(a)(4))*

*AzRSA requests a waiver of statewideness to honor commitments made in an Interagency Agreement between the AzRSA and the Az Department of Education.*

*The Interagency Agreement provides for a greater level of VR participation in serving students while they are still in high school for those schools which participate in funding such services by providing match funds. This creates unequal opportunities for transition students in areas of the State where such agreements do not exist.*

*“Transfer Agreements” and “YTP Contracts” are used to receive funds from school districts which are then used to receive monies to be used as match for federal dollars. These agreements contain commitments by AzRSA that all or part of the resulting resources will be made available to begin vocational preparation of high school students (IPE services) while they are still students.*

- *One mechanism for preparing high school students for the world of work are “YTP Contracts” with local school districts. These contracts permit the AzRSA to develop and buy specialized vocational preparation services from schools for its disabled students, while they are still in school.*
- *Another mechanism includes the use of the resulting matched monies for additional AzRSA staff and for use as case service monies to begin serving high school students earlier under IPEs.*

*The Interagency Agreement also contains assurances that the existing Order of Selection applies to all services under this Waive.*

## **INTERAGENCY COOPERATION WITH OTHER AGENCIES AND ENTITIES**

### **(1) COOPERATION WITH AGENCIES THAT ARE NOT IN THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE INVESTMENT SYSTEM AND WITH OTHER ENTITIES**

This section describes interagency cooperation with, and utilization of the services and facilities of the Federal, State, and local agencies and programs, including programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the United States Department of Agriculture and State use contracting programs, to the extent that such agencies and programs are not carrying out activities through the statewide workforce investment system in accordance with **Section 4.9(c) of the VR State Plan**.

#### **Disabled inner city youth - IGA with City of Phoenix**

The City of Phoenix has had an agreement for several years with ARSA in which a VR counselor is dedicated to serving the City's employees who might need vocational rehabilitation services. More recently, the ARSA and the City of Phoenix have joined forces with the city through the city's Clear Path program. The Clear Path program provides training and employment opportunities with the City to inner city youth. This program has now been expanded to include inner city youth with disabilities. Use of third party match funds from the City has made this program possible.

#### **Persons with Serious Mental Illness - ISA between ARSA and ADHS/DBHS**

The existing Interagency Service Agreement between ARSA and the Arizona Department of Health Services Division of Behavioral Health Services has been renewed through June 30, 2003. This Agreement coordinates services to mutual clients. VR counselors are assigned to work with behavioral health clinical teams throughout the State. Monies to provide long-term supported employment services for individuals with serious mental illness through June 30, 2000 have also been turned over to Region 1 staff to manage.

#### **Youth Offenders - ISAs between ARSA and ADJC and Arizona Supreme Court**

ARSA has expanded its agreement with the Arizona Department of Juvenile Corrections (ADJC) to serve more juvenile offenders in Region 1 and expanded the program to Region 2.

In addition to working agreements with the ADJC, ARSA has entered into an agreement with the Arizona Supreme Court (acting as fiscal agent) and the Maricopa County Juvenile Probation Department to serve youth with disabilities. Eight (8) newly funded VR staff will serve this agreement.

#### **American Indians - MOUs with Section 121 recipients**

ARSA has agreement with the Navajo Tribal Rehabilitation Program and all other Section 121 recipients to cooperate and coordinate with its Project goals and strategies.

**TANF Recipients - MOU with JOBS Administration**

ARSA has expanded its agreements with the Department's JOBS Administration to facilitate Welfare to Work activities in the state. The partnership assists recipients of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) who are disabled to better access the JOBS programming for employment as well as the VR program. ARSA reviews and consults with JOBS staff on individual cases, provides training to JOBS staff about vocational rehabilitation and disability awareness issues, and provides VR services to eligible individuals referred by the JOBS program.

**University Students with Disabilities - IGAs with Arizona Universities**

ARSA continues to have linkages with the universities in Arizona. There are contractual agreements regarding services for notetaking, Braille, and sign language interpreting with the three universities.

**Persons with Industrial Injuries - ISA with the Industrial Commission of Arizona (ICA)**

ARSA has an interagency agreement with the Industrial Commission of Arizona (ICA) to serve work injured individuals who meet the qualifications of both agencies. The ICA contributes funding which is used to match federal dollars to serve work-injured individuals in the state.

**Persons with Developmental Disabilities** - ARSA has a formal relationship with the Division of Developmental Disabilities. An agreement exists which provides for cooperation and coordination in the referral and provision of services to persons with developmental disabilities who can benefit from Vocational Rehabilitation service but will require ongoing employment supports from the Division of Developmental Disabilities. The agreement provides tools and procedures for such coordination.

**School to Work Transition** - A formal Interagency Agreement between ARSA, the Department of Education's "Exceptional Student Services" and the DES Division of Developmental Disabilities exists which clearly state the cooperative relationships between these three entities to improve outcomes for youth in their transition to adult life. Work is underway to incorporate the Department of Health Services, Children Services, into this Interagency Agreement.

**(2) Coordination with education officials to facilitate transition of students with disabilities from school to the receipt of VR services**

This section describes plans, policies, and procedures for coordination between the designated State agency and education officials responsible for the public education of students with disabilities that are designed to facilitate the transition of the students who are individuals with disabilities from the receipt of educational services in school to the receipt of vocational rehabilitation services under **Section 4.9 (d) of the State Plan** which also includes information on a formal interagency agreement with the State educational agency that, at a minimum, provides for:

- (1) consultation and technical assistance to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including vocational rehabilitation services;
- (2) transition planning by personnel of the designated State agency and the educational agency for students with disabilities that facilitates the development and completion of their individualized education programs under section 614(d) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act;
- (3) the roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining State lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services; and
- (4) procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services.

**Interagency Agreement with the Arizona Department of Education**

The ARSA and the Arizona Department of Education have an agreement that meets all of the requirements contained in the Rehab Act, IDEA, and this State Plan.

Special issues ARSA continues to deal with include:

- the issue of Charter Schools;
- special needs of persons who are deaf and persons who are blind;
- access and outreach to youth who are disabled but not in Special Education programming (especially the "504" kids and the non-identified disabled youth);
- meeting the basic requirement to do outreach, coordination, and IPE preparation for all students who want and need VR services before graduation; and
- parameters for use of third party match funds and special programs with the schools (e.g. the Youth Transition Programs, summer programs for youth who are blind, etc.).

**Agreements with Local Education Agencies (LEA)**

ARSA regional management staff continue to expand and make formal cooperative relationships with Arizona schools.

The ARSA makes a clear separation between:

- a. third party match funding agreements (which involving receipt of third party match monies to help ARSA provide transition services to the affected schools) and
- b. contracts with schools to develop and fund specific work transition projects for VR clients within the school. These contracts typically involve funding staff within the school to manage the projects and funding work projects themselves (supplies, equipment, transportation, etc.).

### **(3) Cooperative Agreements with Private Non-profit Vocational Rehabilitation Service Providers**

This section describes the manner in which the designated State agency establishes cooperative agreements with private non-profit vocational rehabilitation service providers <b>per State Plan 5.6 (b)</b> .
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Although ARSA contracts with over 150 private non-profit community vocational rehabilitation service providers, it does not have any formal cooperative agreements with private non-profit vocational rehabilitation service providers. The following describes the relationship the ARSA has with CRPs.

A quasi-formal community rehabilitation advisory committee has been in existence for many years. It is comprised of regional CRP representatives and CRP representatives for special populations (individual who are blind, deaf, T.B.I., etc.). This committee meets quarterly with ARSA management staff. It provides advice and assists in planning the improvement or expansion of programs to meet the needs of Arizonans with disabilities.

The ARSA is rethinking ARSA policies and contracts regarding employment related services (job development and placement, work adjustment training, and supported employment services). ARSA will introduce new Performance Based Contracts in the coming year.

The ARSA supports community rehabilitation providers' interest in Javitt's Wagner O'Day (JWOD) contracts.

#### **(4) EVIDENCE OF COLLABORATION REGARDING SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES AND EXTENDED SERVICES**

This section describes the efforts of the designated State agency to identify and make arrangements, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other State agencies and other appropriate entities to assist in the provision of supported employment services and other public or nonprofit agencies or organizations within the State, employers, natural supports, and other entities with respect to the provision of extended services in accordance with **Section 7.5 of the Supported Employment State Plan**.

Collaborative efforts exist between ARSA and the Division of Behavioral Health Services, the Division of Developmental Disabilities, the Department of Economic Security and County Associations of Government, and the Governor's Advisory Council for Spinal and Head Injuries (GACSHI) to make ongoing employment supports available to graduates of the VR program who need them.

##### **Collaboration with the Division of Behavioral Health Services**

The Arizona Rehabilitation Services Administration (ARSA) has an ongoing interagency service agreement (ISA) with the Division of Behavior Health (ADHS/DBHS) to serve individuals with severe mental illnesses. This ISA contains joint vision and mission statements and sets overall policy for services to clients/members of both agencies. It emphasizes the relationship between mental health and work and the need for both agencies to integrate the concept of work into everything that is done for, and with, clients/members. Major provisions include:

- The establishment of an Advisory Committee that is made up of providers, consumers, and VR and Regional Behavioral Authority management. This Advisory Committee meets quarterly.
- The development of Regional Vocational Plans between ARSA Regions and the local Regional Behavioral Health Authorities (RBHAs). These plans contain goals, standards, referral procedures, joint training, etc.
- The ISA calls for extensive staff training and has developed a yearly training budget and calendar with the support of ARSA staff. Training is provided to serve the needs of all stakeholders in this agreement, the consumers, providers of service, clinicians, and VR staff by dedicated trainers funded under this ISA.
- The ISA calls for dedicated VR counselors who have been trained to work with individuals with severe mental illnesses.
- In addition, the ISA assigns the responsibility to provide extended support services to the BHS Regional Authorities in each area of the state. The current ISA strengthens the commitment of BHS to fund extended support services following transition from VR services.

### **Collaboration with the Division of Developmental Disabilities**

Collaborative efforts have been on-going for over twenty years with the Division of Developmental Disabilities to meet the employment needs of individuals with developmental disabilities. In 1993, the responsibility for all employment related programming to this population shifted to ARSA. Responsibility for ongoing employment support service needs of individuals with developmental disabilities has now been re-assigned to the Division of Developmental Disabilities. Employment related services are coordinated with the Division of Developmental Disabilities under a joint agreement that describes mutual roles and responsibilities. Coordination of services is handled at the local VR counselor/DDD support coordinator level. Only time-limited VR supported employment services are the responsibility of ARSA.

### **Collaboration within DES and with the Councils of Government for a share of the Social Security Block Grant monies**

ARSA works within the Department of Economic Security and the Councils of Government (COG) to access Social Services Block Grant (Title XX) resources.

ARSA assists the DES and the COGs with planning how to best use their portions of the SSBG resources. Through this collaboration, the ARSA has been able to obtain resources to pay for the extended employment support services needed by VR consumers with the most significant disabilities who graduate from the VR program. ARSA contracts these monies directly with private, non-profit organizations.

### **Collaboration with the Governor's Advisory Council for Spinal and Head Injuries (GACSHI)**

The Spinal and Head Injury Trust Fund is managed by the GACSHI with administrative oversight and support from ARSA. The ARSA and the GACSHI are currently preparing a proposal to start a pilot program to provide employment support services (ESS) to individuals with traumatic brain injuries and individuals with spinal cord injuries. If funded, these projects will provide ESS for a small group of VR graduates. The project will also include a research component to study the effectiveness of new ways for providing ESS to these populations.

## PROCEDURES AND ACTIVITIES REGARDING THE ESTABLISHMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF A COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

The Arizona Rehabilitation Services Administration (ARSA) has a comprehensive system of personnel development (CSPD). It is managed by the Personnel Manager who supervises the Personnel Management function (one full time staff) and the HRD Manager who supervises the Staff Development and Training Section (three full time staff ), plus a shared secretary. The State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) has the opportunity to ask questions or give input to CSPD activities throughout the year, and has reviewed and approved the State Plan.

### QUALIFIED STAFF UPDATE

#### “Qualified Staff” – Plan of Action

**GOAL:** All ARSA staff who provide professional services to the public rehabilitation client will meet the “qualified” staff personnel standards established for Arizona Rehabilitation Services Administration.

OBJECTIVES:	Completed	On-Going	In Process
Set CSPD standards	X		
Improve RSA’s personnel data system	X		
Compile database of professional staff and their degrees	X		
Update and report annually on CSPD status			X
Obtain professional development plans from all staff who don’t meet RSA CSPD standards	X		
▪ Update plans annually	X for 2004		X
▪ Obtain plans for new staff	X for 2004	X	
Provide training options for staff to obtain a masters degree	X		
▪ Provide tuition reimbursements for individual classes		X	
▪ Sponsorship of a 2 year Masters Degree program in Rehabilitation through the UofA	X	X	
▪ UofA, work study Masters in Rehab, part time.	X	X	
CSPD graduate classes, UofA in rehab subjects, for CRC D-4, others to get started	X	X	
Commit funds to support CSPD plan	X		
Review Transcripts for CSPD CRC review of transcripts for D.4 14 individuals completed	X	X	
Reimburse staff for CRC exam and renewal fees		X	
Provide CRC Exam Prep class and study materials	X 2004	materials	Scheduled 9-01-05
Increase counselor salary	X		

OBJECTIVES:	Completed	On-Going	In Process
Increase recruiting strategies	X		
Personnel waiver	Available at this time		
Provide internship sites		X	
Develop new strategies		X	
Change MQ's to reflect qualified staff standard	X		
Establish salary incentive for staff who have or obtain qualified staff standard			X
Increase new hires who meet qualified staff standard		X	
Monitor progress of CSPD plan		X	

### **“Qualified Staff” Data**

STATUS	2004	2005
Total Number of Counselors/Regional Representatives/Supervisors 221 filled positions, 24 vacancies for 2005	249	245
# of Counselors/Reps/Supervisors/ Managers who Meet Qualified Staff Standard	115	138
# of Counselors/Reps/Supervisors Who do Not Meet Standard	134	107
# Graduated to date from Uof A/RSA Masters in Rehabilitation Counseling program		67
# That will graduate May, 2005 from U of A Masters in Rehabilitation Counseling: will change the number of who meets standard to 139 meets and 105 do not meet standard.		2
# Enrolled U of A Masters in Rehabilitation Counseling Part Time beginning fall 2003		11
# Enrolled U of A Masters in Rehabilitation Counseling full time ( 2 or 3 year option beginning fall, 2004) * 13 have applications in for fall, 2005 and two new hires are already enrolled in the U of A Masters in Rehab. *Three additional staff enrolled spring, 2005 as part of the 2004 class	15	15
# enrolled other Colleges/University in CSPD plan		9

### **“Qualified Staff” Standards**

ARSA considers it a priority to retain and or hire personnel who meet national standards for rehabilitation counseling. ARSA has adopted the national Commission on Rehabilitation Counseling Certification (CRCC) education and experience standards as Arizona's "CSPD qualified" standard. Counselors are not being required to take the CRC examination itself.

Current State of Arizona minimum qualifications (MQs) for professional Rehabilitation Specialist III and Program Representative do not require that candidates be CSPD qualified. They require a minimum of a Bachelor's degree plus two years of related human service work experience equivalent to a Rehabilitation Services Specialist II, or a Masters degree in counseling and guidance, nursing, psychology, social work, sociology, education or other closely related behavioral science field and two years of related human service experience, or a Masters degree with a major in rehabilitation or CRC certification. The Department's personnel department has been advised in writing that the preferred education is a Masters degree in Rehabilitation Counseling or a Masters degree in a closely related behavior science field, including counseling. ARSA has also clarified what acceptable human service experience should be. All current job announcements state that preference will be given to applicants who have a Masters in Rehabilitation or closely related field. ARSA can not change the MQ's to hire only "qualified staff" until there are sufficient applicants, including those in rural areas, to meet the needs of the program.

A recommended change in the minimum qualifications for the counselor series has been approved by the State's Personnel Classification's Unit, which reads "must have a Masters in Rehabilitation or Counseling within six years of hire". This change will enable enforcement of ARSA's requirement that counseling staff, that are not CSPD "qualified", must work towards obtaining a Masters degree. ARSA has also has an agreement to be signed by a new counselor who does not meet standard stating that they will meet standard in six years. Failure to provide documentation each year that they are working towards this goal could result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. The Department of Administration and the Attorney General have approved this document. Beginning May 1, 2004, all applicants for counselor and program representative positions have received a copy of the agreement and are asked to sign the agreement if they are hired. To date, 31 agreements are on file.

ARSA has also been working with the Manager of DES Personnel and a Special Projects Personnel Specialist on strategies to assist in the recruitment and retention of staff who meet the "qualified" standard. These strategies include a proposal to pay current staff who meet standards an additional 5% or the mid-range of the salary range, whichever is higher. Individuals who are employed will get the same incentive when they meet the standard. New hires that are "qualified" would be brought in at mid-range of the salary scale. As a result of the meetings with DES Personnel, ARSA has submitted a proposal requesting an incentive pay package. Several adjustments to the proposal have been made as it progresses through the review and approval process. ARSA has been assured that these salary adjustments can be done, but approval is still pending.

ARSA supports individuals in obtaining a CRC and/or AER certification for Rehabilitation Teaching (RT) or Orientation and Mobility (O & M). ARSA budgets \$5,000. per year for reimbursement of CRC exam or renewal costs. Other supports involve offering study materials and exam preparation classes. The HRD manager also reviews transcripts for staff and provides advice on classes and other steps needed to sit for the CRC exam. Needed courses are offered through the U of A as CSPD

graduate courses in rehabilitation counseling.

- ARSA reimbursed 11 individuals for the CRC exam and 14 renewals this past year. There were three RT/O & M reimbursements. Several individuals plan to take the CRC exam in April, 2005, including 2 who will graduate from the U of A Masters in Rehabilitation program. Twenty individuals took the CRC prep class in Sept., 2004, some for the Fall exam, and others for the Spring exam.
- In March, 2005, 65 individuals were certified rehabilitation counselors and 6 were AER certified.
- ARSA and Region IX RCEP provide CRC maintenance credits for all ARSA in-service training.

All professional staff and supervisors who do not meet the “qualified” counselor standard have been identified and have an updated or new CSPD “professional development plan” in place. The individual plans include a variety of options, including having transcripts evaluated by CRC, working on taking coursework to meet the qualifications for the D-4 CRC, enrolling in degree programs with state universities, and taking individual CSPD classes offered by the University of Arizona (with plans to enroll in the formal graduate program). In January, 2004, all supervisors and managers provided updated information on the progress made by his/her staff towards completing their plan during the 2003 calendar year. Each person who did not meet the standards completed a plan update, including planned activities for 2004. This was approved by the supervisor. The HRD Manager has a copy of individual plans and updates. Work is underway to update plans for 2005.

In Fall 2004, fourteen transcripts were reviewed by CRC for ARSA staff that were determined eligible for the extension until 2006 for the D.4 category of CRC. These counselors will be working to obtain the necessary classes to make them eligible to sit for the exam and thus meet the qualified staff status.

All supervisors have been provided a copy of the 25<sup>th</sup> Institute of Rehabilitation Issues publication, “Achieving Employment Outcomes Through VR Counselors who Meet the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development Requirements” to assist them in counseling staff who have questions about the standard. The HRD Manager also counsels staff on CSPD issues on an on-going basis.

## **RECRUITMENT, PREPARATION AND RETENTION OF STAFF**

### **Data Systems**

The ARSA has a data system for personnel, which includes access to the Human Resource Management System (HRMS) of the Department of Economic Security. The ARSA system is a stand-alone PC based system using Microsoft ACCESS software. It contains up-to-date information on all employed individuals. The personnel database has been updated with needed enhancements. Ad hoc reports can be generated (for each classification category) to provide affirmative action information, to assist in manpower planning, to track academic degree levels and major areas of study, to provide information to project retirement dates, and other data as needed.

In addition to ad hoc reports from the personnel data system, the ARSA maintains data as follows:

- Personnel logs and data used to assist in analyzing turnover, processing time for new hires, and the numbers of current vacancies.

- Caseload sizes for staff. (This data is used to project overall staffing needs and manpower planning for special projects and for diversity management)
- Educational levels of all staff. (This information assists RSA in projecting budgets for tuition reimbursement and in identifying training needs, in areas such as “qualified” staff, career development and succession planning)
- The numbers of students enrolled in the University of Arizona’s (UofA): Bachelor degree in Rehabilitation Services program, Masters in Rehabilitation Counseling program, and Doctorate in Rehabilitation Education programs, by personnel category and graduation data.
- Individuals who are working on meeting the “qualified staff” standard, and their progress.
- Staff development and training activities.
- Tuition reimbursements, educational plans and CRC status.
- Copies of professional-development plans for counselors working to meet the “qualified” standard.
- Information on higher education programs that are available to train rehabilitation personnel.

#### Diversity

A review of statistics shows the following staffing pattern:

#### Diversity:

	<u>Counselors</u>		<u>Program Reps</u>		<u>Supervisors</u>	
Male	61	(38%)	15	(48%)	18	(58%)
Female	98	(62%)	16	(52%)	13	(42%)
Caucasian	123	(77%)	24	(77%)	25	(81%)
African American	6	(4%)	2	(6%)	2	(6%)
Asian	3	(2%)	0	0	0	0
American Indian	5	(3%)	1	(3%)	0	0
Hispanic	22	(14%)	4	(13%)	4	(13%)
Disabled	31	(19%)	3	(10%)	4	(13%)
Total Filled Positions:	159		31		31	

<b>* Arizona Population Statistics</b>
63.8% Caucasian
2.9% African American
1.7% Asian
4.5% American Indian
25.3% Hispanic American
*2000 population statistics, U. S. Census Bureau

Recruitment of individuals from minority backgrounds remains an ongoing priority for ARSA. For

existing staff, RSA has successfully recruited several individuals to enroll in the University of Arizona's new Bachelor in Rehabilitation Counseling program. All staff who do not meet the "qualified staff standard" are strongly encouraged to work on an approved Masters degree including individuals with disabilities and who are from a minority culture. Individuals who are minorities or disabled are given priority for selection into the University of Arizona's two year Masters program, if there are more applicants than available slots. Disabled staff are made aware of services from student resources and accommodations available to ensure they can be successful in these programs. One blind RSA counselor has just started a Masters in Rehabilitation Counseling through Distance Learning from San Diego State University. His choice of this program was because it was more accessible to him. Five individuals have begun the PETRA in Rehabilitation Administration program through San Diego State University, including two disabled and two minority individuals.

### **PERSONNEL TO ADDRESS INDIVIDUAL COMMUNICATION NEEDS**

The Arizona State personnel system facilitates recruitment of qualified staff who can speak a Native American language, Spanish and other languages and those who can communicate in American Sign Language through the use of "request for special qualifications." All Rehabilitation Counselors for the Deaf must sign. Efforts continue to increase the numbers of staff who speak Spanish and other languages. The Department now offers Spanish courses to staff. A workshop to teach rehabilitation terminology in Spanish has been offered to RSA staff in the past and was repeated again in January, 2005. An outreach and recruitment effort to reach applicants from diverse cultures continues. It continues to be difficult to recruit staff with other language skills as the salary scales for state personnel remain low and there is not a salary differential for additional language skills. The ARSA continues to advocate for changing this policy.

Purchase of sign language interpreting services or other language interpreters through statewide contracts continues to supplement existing resources. ARSA is exploring the feasibility of using videoconferencing technology for interpreting, which would help in dealing with the shortage of interpreters, especially in rural areas. There is now a system in place using the Internet that enables counselors to communicate with their clients on-line, using sign language

All ARSA materials, including training materials are made available in alternative media. Each region has access to resources to Braille materials and to provide print in alternative media per client and staff request. The Department translates materials into other languages. Most blind individuals now use assistive technology that meets his/her particular needs. Most prefer materials on disk or sent through email rather than Braille.

### **Upward Mobility to Counselor Level Positions**

The minimum qualifications for the Rehabilitation Technician position give credit for both work experience and college work in a human service field. The Counselor I requirements were changed to give credit for 24 credits in a human service degree program plus one year as rehabilitation technician. This expands opportunities for individuals, including minorities to move up the career ladder to counselor. As a result of these changes, several individuals have moved into counselor positions. They are aware that they must complete a Bachelor degree and then continue on with a Masters degree.

## **Recruitment**

Due to growth and turnover, the ARSA has a constant need to recruit qualified applicants. Projecting an average increase in the AZ population of 14% over a five-year period, the total number of RSA counselors should increase from 190 in FFY 2005 to 217 in FFY 2010 based on growth. In addition to growth, ARSA must continue to hire replacement counselors due to the continued high level of turnover and to replace staff who have been promoted or have retired. It is projected that 38 counselors/ reps, supervisors and managers will retire in 2005 and 51 total will retire in the next five years.

### Counselors

Data on hires and terminations of counselors for 2004 shows that:

- There were 36 new hires in 2004: six met the qualified staff standard, and 26 did not. Four have a Masters in Counseling or meet the D.4 extension and have to complete additional course work.
- As of April, 2005, there are eighteen counselor vacancies, six program representative vacancies and one supervisor vacancy.
- The ratio of counselors to individuals served in the VR program, based on FY04 data, is 1:115 (based on 21,788 clients served divided by 190 counselors).

### Other

It continues to be difficult to recruit a sufficient number of individuals who have a Masters degree in rehabilitation or counseling, especially with a starting salary of \$31,326 (Rehabilitation Counselor), \$33,699 (Program Representative.) There continues to be competition from the private sector and finding individuals who meet the “qualified” counselor staff standard to work in small rural offices is almost impossible. When qualified individuals are identified, they do not readily accept a job offer. Qualified counselor staff leave when they discover the complexity and demands of the work involved. In addition, there is an increased demand for specialized expertise in the labor market, there are uncertainties within the field of rehabilitation about the future of the Vocational Rehabilitation program, and consumers offer greater challenges than they used to. In addition, the requirement of qualified staff is a deterrent for some applicants, and a reason to leave for experienced ARSA staff. While some individuals come to work for education benefits, it does not always result in staying after completing a degree. A recent study of the U of A/RSA Masters graduates since 1994 revealed 24 of the 56 graduates have left RSA. Three recently resigned after completing a degree utilizing the educational assistance program. In 2004, five individuals involved in the RSA/U of A Masters in Rehabilitation Counseling resigned, four after graduation, and another during the Masters program.

ARSA works with the UofA, as well as other universities’ counseling and social work programs, to recruit graduate interns and graduates. The ARSA holds job fairs and participates in larger local job fairs to recruit counselors and clerical support staff. There are job listings on the ARSA WEBPAGE, REHABLINK is utilized, and AZRSA has state job listings on the national job bank. Utilization of the agency’s Project Hire (administered by ARSA) has been an effective tool for recruiting and hiring persons with disabilities. The ARSA Personnel Manager has been participating in the Region IX Recruitment Project. ARSA is currently in the process of establishing two paid internship positions, which hopefully will result in more U of A on-campus Masters students doing an internship with the public rehabilitation program.

There is a close working relationship between the UofA and the ARSA aimed at recruiting graduates from University of Arizona programs. Joint activities include the establishment of internships and practicum placements in local Vocational Rehabilitation offices, mentoring, and presentations by ARSA staff to classes. All of these activities enhance the opportunity to recruit graduates.

Two ARSA staff serve on the University of Arizona's advisory committee providing input regarding rehabilitation education curricula and their relevancy to the State Rehabilitation program. The University of Arizona graduates an average of forty students yearly from its various rehabilitation training programs. There are no other rehabilitation training programs in the State. On the average, from their on-campus programs, the University of Arizona has in programs:

- Forty (40) individuals in the Bachelor degree program majoring in rehabilitation,
- Forty-one full time (41) and twenty-six (26) part time students in the rehabilitation counselor Masters program,
- Thirty-two (32) are in the Doctoral degree rehabilitation program,
- Eight on-campus and two ARSA CSPD staff will graduate in May, 2005.

### **Hiring and Payment Practices for Counselors**

The ARSA works closely with the State Personnel staff to ensure that qualified applicants are placed on hiring lists, when direct hire is not in effect.

- Regional managers and supervisors are encouraged to increase their efforts to recruit qualified staff locally, with continued attention to finding applicants from underserved populations. RSA has had a waiver of the personnel rules for direct hire most of the time from 1999-to the present time, which has to be renewed every year. The waiver is expected to expire in March, 2005 and ARSA has requested another extension. This waiver reduces the time needed to complete the hire and helps in competing for qualified staff in the labor market. The Personnel Manager works closely with supervisors regarding their staffing needs. The Department has a new on-line recruiting and application system which simplifies the application process and provides on-line access to current job openings. All new hires at the professional level are reviewed by the Personnel Manager and approved by the Program Administrator.

### **Counselor Job Simplification to Assist with Staff Retention**

The ARSA is addressing the complexity of the counselor's job as part of the agency's five-year Strategic Plan. Two foci are: (a) the simplification of the MIS system (IRIS) and (b) the expansion of the original four pilot offices addressing changes in processes, work roles and other issues. The RSA Strategic plan is to convert all of its offices to this model, which is called a "tech office". The expansion of the tech office implementation, which has been delayed due to hiring freezes and budget issues, began implementation in 2004. Staff recruitment and hiring was completed in early 2005 and seventeen offices received training and support as they implemented the changes, effective April 1, 2005. It expected that the remainder of the RSA offices will have implemented the change by Sept, 2005.

Additionally, work groups have worked on streamlining forms. The RSA policy manual has been updated and simplified, and it has been made available on-line through the Intranet, along with forms and a wealth of other information used by counselors. This includes an updated Individual Employment Plan (IEP). A manual was written for the new Payment and Procurement Technicians. Materials and training on using the Internet as a resource are provided to counselors as part of the annual training plan.

### **STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING**

#### **CSPD Agreement between University of Arizona and ARSA**

In 2001, a 5-year UofA/ARSA intergovernmental agreement was negotiated, with an annual ARSA contribution of \$56,000. plus annual adjustments for inflation. This amount is to augment salaries to cover both Masters and CSPD classes. This on-going UofA/ARSA agreement that provides for a Masters in Rehabilitation Program for ARSA staff has graduated sixty-seven individuals to date. Two will graduate in May, 2005. This number is low, as eleven individuals began a part-time program in Fall, 2003. An additional twelve began the program in Fall, 2004 and three more in Spring, 2005. The application process for Fall, 2005 is in process: 13 have applied; two recently hired counselors were already in the program; two navigators have applied for funding through the U of A long-term training grant. The 2004 and 2005 classes will choose from a two or three year option. Some will be graduating with a Masters in Psychiatric Rehabilitation, utilizing a new grant-funded program at the U of A. Some classes that are being offered for ARSA are combined with on-campus students. This gives other students the opportunity to learn more about the state VR program. A total of six Masters and CSPD classes were offered VIA videoconference for Fall 2004 and six in the Spring, 2005 semester.

For the past five years, the University of Arizona has continued to provide graduate level courses in rehabilitation (CSPD classes) for ARSA staff. This assists personnel with graduate degrees in fields other than rehabilitation/counseling to obtain the necessary coursework to qualify for the D-4 CRC category and to sit for the CRC exam. In addition, those with counseling degrees usually need at least two rehabilitation counseling courses to be eligible for the CRC exam. In 2004, 61 individuals attended one or more CSPD classes: Principles of Rehabilitation, Psych/Social/Cultural Aspects of Disability and Medical Aspects of Disability. The size of the CSPD classes has been reduced from 25 to 20 due to a significant increase in tuition. ARSA paid for the books and a significant amount of the tuition costs for several courses in 2004, until the U of A received a new five-year CSPD grant.

The Commission on Rehabilitation Certification offered State agencies the opportunity in 2004 to have an individual's graduate degree documentation reviewed for a fee of \$100. per person in order to receive a two-year extension on the D.4 category of CRC. Fourteen ARSA staff completed this review.

### **Development and Training for Professional and Para-Professional Staff**

The ARSA ensures that professional and para-professional staff are appropriately prepared and trained by setting standards (minimum qualifications) which applicants must meet to be hired or promoted. Competencies have been established for most counselor/program representative positions, including specialty counselors. A competency based comprehensive staff development and training program provides both basic and continuing education for staff. In addition, a career development program provides for educational assistance for academic programs of study, management and leadership training and opportunities for personal development training.

The RSA In-Service Training Plan is approved by the ARSA Management Team and is funded by an RSA In-Service Training Grant and other resources.

The training plan has traditionally been based on an annual training needs assessment. A training needs assessment survey was completed in Spring, 2004 with input by staff in each office, and updated in Spring, 2005. In addition, there was a comprehensive training needs assessment for counselors working with severely mentally ill individuals. This was accomplished as part of the vocational plan development in each region for the RSA/ Behavioral Health Interagency Agreement. Staff input is solicited for specialty counselor, supervisor, rehabilitation technician and secretary training sessions to insure that selected topics meet current needs. In addition, topics are listed from general counselors and input is received to ensure our basic training is meeting counselor's needs.

The HRD unit lost one training position in 2003, due to budget constraints. A new trainer started in February, 2004, replacing a vacant position due to retirement. In December, 2004 a third trainer was hired to fill a position that was held vacant for a year due to budget issues. Region IX RCEP has been very helpful by increasing the amount of training they do in Arizona each year.

### Basic Training

Basic training includes: (a) new employee orientation, (b) a Core training series for new counselors, (c) mandatory stand alone classes to augment Core, (d) a rehabilitation technician training series, (e) training on the ARSA's client management information system, and (f) programmatic training for professional and clerical support staff. Staff also have access to training on a variety of computer software used by ARSA.

Basic training provides training on the Rehabilitation Act, regulations and State policy. As needed, additional training is provided on policy manual changes. The basic training includes a focus on relationship management and client informed choice throughout all the Core curriculum modules. Assistive technology, ADA and WIA are also covered in Core.

Ten "stand alone" classes are offered several times a year. New staff are expected to attend. The topics for these classes are:

- Medical Aspects Series,
- Ethics,
- Assistive Technology,
- Client Service Management,
- Supported Employment,
- Counseling Skill Building,
- Cultural Diversity/Disability Culture, and
- Using Internet in Rehabilitation Practice.
- Social Security 101
- Vocational Guidance and Career Counseling

### Skill Building and Continuing Education

Skill building and continuing education are provided each year based on staff input. Funding is provided in the training budget to also enable staff to participate in out-service training workshops and conferences. Special attention is given to training for specialty counselors, and they are consulted regarding their training needs. Included in the ARSA training plan is a separate training plan for services to individuals with chronic and severe mental illness (SMI) under an Interagency Service Agreement with ADHS/Behavioral Health Services. An employment focus is maintained throughout all training.

### Career Development

The ARSA has established a career ladder in the rehabilitation counselor series. A program of tuition reimbursement, career counseling and use of educational plans assists staff in obtaining academic credit to facilitate career advancement.

The DES tuition reimbursement policy was revised in 2001, providing prepaid tuition and books. This eliminated the barrier for individuals who formerly had to pay all costs and be reimbursed at the end of the class.

- ARSA spent \$24,392. on tuition and books in 2004. During 2003, until Fall session 2004, the Department stopped the educational assistance program due to budget constraints. As a result, funds were reallocated from the in-service training grant to pay the tuition and books for those counselors in a graduate program that will lead to them meeting the CSPD qualified staff standard. The educational assistance program was reinstated for the Fall 2004 semester.
- ARSA increased the tuition reimbursement budget from \$10,000. to \$25,000. per year in 1999, and has maintained this level of funding: \$5,000 is from the in-service training grant; \$20,000 is from other funding. Preference for these funds is being given to support for educational plans leading to a Masters degree in Rehabilitation or a related field if funds become limited. ARSA spent \$29,520. to cover part of the tuition and all of the books for three CSPD Masters in Rehabilitation classes for Fall 2003 through Summer 2004. This was due to a 40% increase in tuition at the U of A for graduate classes. The U of A CSPD grant, which had not been increased to cover the tuition increase for the university, covered the remaining tuition. U of A received a new five year CSPD grant beginning Fall, 2004 and was able to again cover the tuition and books for 20 ARSA students

for three CSPD classes per year. The current cost per student for a two year's Masters degree at the U of A is \$11,122., and one course plus books is \$756.00. It is similar at other State universities.

- These figures are in addition to the funding for the UA/ARSA intergovernmental agreement for the Masters program, which is \$79,133.00 in 2005-2006.
- There are nine individuals pursuing a Masters degree towards "qualified staff" in universities other than the U of A. There are two counselors pursuing Bachelor degrees.

### **Development and Training of Supervisors and RSA Management Staff**

Succession planning is critical for ARSA, due to an increasing number of retirements projected in the next five to ten years. The HRD manager provides advice, upon request, to staff who wish to pursue leadership or supervisor positions, or other advanced level positions such as positions in Central Office or those outside the counselor series. Suggestions are offered regarding training opportunities and other activities to increase leadership potential.

- As part of the plan for leadership development and capacity building, the ARSA participates in management and leadership programs available from Region IX RCEP and through the Department of Economic Security's (DES) Office of Management Development in partnership with the Arizona State University. .
- ARSA employees participated in the past PETRA Graduate Certificate Programs in Rehabilitation Administration offered by RCEP IX. This program has again been made available to Arizona beginning in September, 2004 with five slots filled by Arizona. It has been funded by an RSA grant.
- Training sessions for supervisors are in the annual training plan, and new supervisors are required to complete the Department's new supervisor series within six month of hire.
- Nine graduates from the U of A Masters in Rehabilitation and one from the Doctoral program are in supervisor or manager positions.

### **Other Training Supports**

The ARSA program support staff provide additional training and technical support in areas of policy/procedure expertise regarding independent living, employment, social security, transition from school to work, blind/visually impaired, deaf/hearing impaired, developmental disabilities, rehabilitation technology, and Ticket to Work. The Head and Spinal Cord Injury Council has established a resource library on spinal cord and traumatic brain injuries and is involved in training and technical assistance as well. This council continues to allocate funding for training activities in the areas of spinal cord injury and head injury, which will supplement the ARSA training budget. ARSA trainers provide individual tutoring to staff with special needs upon request. This includes training for new employees who are blind, particularly to teach the MIS system and forms.

To support staff development and other training activities, the ARSA maintains a library of training resources/materials including videotapes, results of research, and best practices. Materials are disseminated to staff in training sessions, and resource materials are available in local offices. Staff have access to the Internet as a resource, and have been provided training and a resource manual for using the Internet in rehabilitation.

The ARSA training staff continues to utilize RCEP IX, Research and Training Centers, University of Arizona professors, Mississippi State University, the West Virginia Commonwealth, and other RSA

funded training resources.

Trainers have received explicit and detailed instruction on how the needs of staff with alternate communication needs will be met. Sign language interpreters are provided for training when needed, as are FM systems.

### **Distance Learning**

The four video-conferencing sites in Phoenix, Tucson, Flagstaff and Yuma expedite distance learning and they are being used for most training. This has greatly reduced the need for staff to travel. Both trainers and trainees have adjusted to this new method of teaching. The University of Arizona has partnered with ARSA to buy the necessary equipment to enable Tucson to also be a broadcast site (in addition to the Phoenix broadcast site). This enables University of Arizona classes to be offered through videoconference. The U of A conducted 11 courses on videoconferencing in 2004. The videoconferencing equipment was updated in Spring 2005. In addition, ARSA will purchase two new podiums for the Phoenix and Tucson sites. These are adjustable to accommodate trainers and guest speakers who are in wheelchairs.

ARSA has set up a small computer training room in Tucson, so that computer training can be offered to staff in Region II without requiring travel to Phoenix.

ARSA recently learned that the Department has access to a Department of Administration's STARS training tracking system. This will provide an on-line training registration and a staff training record keeping system. It is hopeful to have this running for ARSA by Fall, 2005.

### **EVALUATING THE PERFORMANCE OF REHABILITATION STAFF**

The Department has established a performance evaluation system called ESTEEM. All staff receive training on ESTEEM. The ESTEEM includes individualized, measurable performance standards, an on-going communication requirement and a professional development plan. The ESTEEM also has a system for employees to provide feedback on supervisors. All staff receive their ESTEEM planning document when hired and the training to understand the system. There are provisions for a system of performance improvement when staff do not perform up to standard. Human Resource Section staff provide technical assistance to supervisors when they have staff who need to improve performance, and special individual performance training plans are developed, as appropriate. The personnel system includes performance increases based on merit, (when allocated by the legislature), which is tied into performance measured by the ESTEEM. The ARSA sets standards for quality as well as productivity, including writing plans and successful closures. In 2000, the ESTEEM was revised to add an additional rating level of Exceptional Performance. In 200, counselors and supervisors were given numbers of successful rehabilitations required for meeting different rating levels for their ESTEEM. This was done in an effort to improve productivity. All supervisors have received "ESTEEM for Supervisors" Training.

### **COORDINATION WITH DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION UNDER THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT (IDEA)**

Transition from school to work remains an important part of the ARSA's program of services.

Competencies for school to work transition counselors are in place, and there are specialty counselors in each region. They work closely with schools in a variety of cooperative agreements and special projects. Joint training is ongoing. For a number of years, ARSA and the Arizona Department of Education/Exceptional Student Services (ADE/ESS) have had an Interagency agreement. In 2004, this agreement was expanded to include the Arizona Department of Developmental Disabilities (DDD). Conversation is underway in 2005 to add the Arizona Department of Health Services to involve services to students with mental illness in this agreement. Throughout 2004, twelve training meetings were held throughout the state in local communities and VIA videoconference to discuss this cooperative agreement. The purpose was to strengthen the working relationships of staff from all three agencies and to strategize ways to improve services.

As part of the partnership between ARSA/ADE/ESS/ and DDD, there was a joint transition conference in September, 2004, attended by over 900 people, including 100 ARSA staff. ARSA participated in the planning and funding for this conference, and ARSA staff presented several of the training sessions that focused on employment and collaboration between ARSA counselor and school personnel.

The goal of this 2004 conference was to focus on the following:

- Adult service providers, eligibility criteria and program options,
- Legal implications for students in transition to work and higher education,
- Model programs throughout Arizona and,
- Strategies for empowering students and families.

A similar conference is in the planning stages to be held in September, 2005. Again, a number of field and training staff are involved in the selection of topics, presenters, accommodations and other committees planning the conference, and ARSA is participating in the funding of this conference. The conference is being planned for 1200 people.

The Arizona Transition Leadership Team (ATLT), which formed in early 2004 to work towards improving results for all Arizona youth, has been active this past year. They formed a Steering Committee and recruited 27 partners representing major state and local organizations. A vision, mission and statewide support structure were developed. Four teams: Data, Communication and Outreach, Interagency Cooperation/MOU, and Public Relations were formed, whose roles are based on the mission and statewide support. Specific strategies, priorities with objectives, action steps and time frames are being developed and implemented.

In 2004, several members of ATLT attended a National Communities of Practice conference at Penn State University. An outcome of that event was a commitment to send staff to local/state similar conferences in 2005. Two ARSA staff will attend conferences, each in different states, with plans to bring back information to the ATLT and others.

Other activities in Maricopa County in 2004 included:

- All Gilbert Public Schools were invited to a training on “How to Job Develop,” and “Assessments and the VR Process.”
- A quarterly transition meeting was held that included a training component.
- Two school districts from the East Valley YTP program visited the local One Stop Center.

Throughout the beautiful and largely rural communities of Northern Arizona's District III, training related to transition and the IDEA occurs in three primary collaborative efforts. The first is regular weekly meetings at the Youth Transition Programs across the District. These YTP program teams discuss best practices and IDEA and Rehabilitation Act changes as well as coordinate case activity for clients. The joint funding for these programs includes school and VR staff participation in the statewide transition conference. This annual training highlights best practices and specific IDEA information and is a second tool for information sharing. The third training tool is local transition teams or "communities of practice". These groups have broad-based community participation and meet monthly. Department of Education transition staff attend and provide IDEA updates at these meetings.

Examples of the success of these methods include: 1. The Continental Project, a nationally recognized best practice project from Flagstaff, presented at the state transition conference in September. This coming year the Cottonwood Transition Team will receive technical assistance from The Continental Project to replicate this effective business/education transition partnership. 2. The Prescott Transition Team will work with Northern Arizona University to again provide a graduate class in transition. This class has been provided twice in the past and has been very well attended and reached staff at many small school districts.

In Pima County, VR counselors, assigned to the various high schools, and special education staff meet to discuss program issues and successes. A Pima County Transition Consortium has been formed where the VR Counselor and school staff meet on a quarterly basis to discuss ways of enhancing VR processes and services. Once a year, the consortium invites different community agencies to give a presentation on their services. This is done in a forum type of approach allowing the audience to ask specific questions of the representatives, relating to students with disabilities transitioning from the school to the world of work. In addition, RSA participates in a Transition Fair on a yearly basis (in March) where VR staff conducts presentations to the community about VR services. The Transition Fair is open to parents, students, school personnel and the general community. Attendees learn about education, employment, housing, recreating, transportation, financial assistance and community living. Also, RSA participates annually in a meeting with the special education staff from the Tucson Unified School District (including their job developers) and DDD staff. Both VR and DDD staff inform school staff about their respective program services, including updates in program policy and how the partnership of the VR/DDD agencies work together to support mutual clients.

## **RESULTS OF COMPREHENSIVE STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT OF THE REHABILITATION NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES AND NEED TO ESTABLISH, DEVELOP OR IMPROVE COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS**

The Arizona Rehabilitation Services Administration, the State Rehabilitation Council and the Interwork Institute at San Diego State University jointly conducted an assessment of the vocational rehabilitation and independent living needs of persons with disabilities residing in the state during 2003-2004. The purpose of the assessment was to provide planners with information pertinent to the allocation of resources, to provide a rationale for the development of the Rehabilitation Services Administration's State Plan, and to comply with the needs assessment mandate in the Rehabilitation Act.

The needs assessment process and survey instruments were developed through a review of relevant literature and consultation with Rehabilitation Services Administration staff, representatives of the State Rehabilitation Council, faculty and staff at the Interwork Institute, research staff at the Social Science Research Laboratory at San Diego State University, and groups of persons with disabilities. The final structure of the surveys designed for individuals and community agencies was organized around the following six categories: mobility, communication, self-care, interpersonal skills, work skills, and work tolerance.

Surveys were conducted with persons with disabilities and representatives of organizations that serve persons with disabilities in the state. Focus groups in the state were conducted with persons with disabilities, representatives of agencies that provide services to individuals with disabilities, and a limited number of representatives of the business community.

Four hundred sixty survey responses were received from individuals with disabilities. Survey respondents were asked to indicate the presence or absence of unmet need on forty-four separate topics representing six different areas of function. Responses were numerically coded with a value of "Yes" = 1 and "No" = 0. As a result, the possible mean scores for each of these forty-four items could range from a maximum score of 1.00, indicating needs for that item were completely unmet, to a minimum score of 0.00, indicating needs for that item were completely met. It is interesting to note that the strongest expressions of unmet need pertained to employment-related issues. Examples of strongly expressed unmet needs were:

<b>Survey Item</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>
Learning about the work settings that would be best for you	452	0.58
Getting information on how to progress in your career	450	0.57
Understanding benefits, such as SSI, SSDI, welfare, state disability, etc.	453	0.54
Determining how computers or other technology might help you at work.	456	0.53
Asking for help with your work or training needs	456	0.49
Getting information about your health insurance benefits	454	0.48
Preparing for job interviews	454	0.47
Preparing a resume, work history, or work experience application	455	0.45
Keeping your job once you become employed	434	0.45
Learning how to meet your medical needs while at work or training	452	0.41
Actually planning or organizing activities, such as job tasks	447	0.39
Learning how to start activities, such as job tasks	456	0.38
Learning how to plan or organize activities, such as job tasks	452	0.37
Learning how to complete activities, such as job tasks	453	0.36
Managing your finances	457	0.36

Getting clothes for work or training	456	0.36
Actually completing activities, such as job tasks	454	0.34
Actually starting activities, such as job tasks	455	0.34
Using information from printed materials and signs	453	0.33
Moving around in the community	457	0.33

Respondents were presented with an open-ended question and asked to describe additional needs that were not addressed in the survey. The most common responses to the open-ended question described needs requiring intervention by specific human resources (e.g., counselors, attendants, and supervisors). Two hundred-thirty of the 459 responses described needs in this category. The following responses are representative of expressed needs in this category:

- “Attendant care for traveling jobs.”
- “Counselor to help her cope with her disability.”
- “I need a patient instructor for career training.”
- “I need tutors.”
- “Learning work and safety awareness.”
- “Mentor.”
- “Need help getting a job.”
- “Need help learning how to raise a child effectively.”
- “Need help knowing how to deal with anxiety disorder in the workplace.”
- “Some way to interpret SSI better.”

Sixty-one responses described needs that could be met through assistive devices, technological equipment, durable medical equipment, or modified environments. The following responses are representative of expressed needs in this category:

- “Accommodations for mobility activities at work.”
- “Computer adaptation.”
- “Ergonomic chair.”
- “Hearing aid.”
- “I need glasses.”

The remaining respondents expressed needs for medical interventions (55 responses), educational or instructional programs (24 responses) or expressed needs that did not fit into the previous categories or were unclear (89 responses).

Sixty-four survey responses were received from representatives of agencies that serve individuals with disabilities in the state. Community agency representatives were asked to evaluate their clients’ needs on the same forty-four items and six areas of function on which individuals rated themselves. It is interesting to note that while there was agreement among persons with disabilities and agency personnel regarding the relative priority of these 44 needs, there was a discrepancy between the level of need stated by individuals and agency representatives. In every case, the agency representatives described a higher level of unmet need than the individuals with disabilities.

Community agency representatives who responded to the open-end question described needs of their clients that required intervention by specific human resources. Thirty-six (59.0%) of the 61 responses expressed needs in this category. The following responses are representative of the expressed needs in

this category:

- “Comprehensive job coaching and development.”
- “Finding employment that will work with her disability.”
- “Learning how to arrive on time for appointments.”
- “Personal care attendant; reliable and trained.”

Focus groups were conducted with persons with disabilities, representatives of agencies that provide services to individuals with disabilities, and representatives of the business community. Focus group participants most frequently discussed needs in the following areas:

- Mobility: Inadequate public transportation in rural and outlying regions.
- Mobility: Insufficient para-transit services.
- Self-Care: Assistance with activities of daily living and attendant care in the workplace.
- Self-Care: Benefits planning consultation and education.
- Interpersonal Skills: Personal responsibility and appropriate workplace behavior training.
- Work Skills: Increased work skills training options.
- Work Skills: Increased access to vocational assessment services.
- Work Tolerance: Consulting, education, and funding for assistive technology.
- Work Tolerance: Increased access to job coaching services.
- Other needs: Improved communication and coordination between service agencies.
- Other needs: Outreach and education efforts directed at employers and the general public.
- Other needs: Increased involvement of rehabilitation counselors in transition planning.
- Other needs: Order of selection and limited access to vocational rehabilitation services.

The needs assessment in the State of Arizona is the result of a cooperative effort between the Rehabilitation Services Administration and the State Rehabilitation Council. The needs assessment efforts solicited information concerning the needs of persons with disabilities from a broad spectrum of persons with disabilities, service providers and employers for the purpose of providing the Rehabilitation Services Administration with direction for addressing current and future structure and resource demands.

The results of the needs assessment provide valuable strategic planning tools and present persons with disabilities and other stakeholders with a conduit for communicating their needs and educating service providers. The data resulting from the needs assessment effort suggests agreement between individuals with disabilities and service agencies with regard to perceptions of need. Findings from this effort provide a cogent and unbiased endorsement of these individuals' motivation to succeed in the employment arena. Rehabilitation Services Administration plans to use this information in a strategic manner that results in collaborative planning. (A full copy of this report is available upon request.)

## **ANNUAL ESTIMATES OF INDIVIDUALS TO BE SERVED AND COSTS OF SERVICES**

1. *Estimate the number of individuals in the State who are eligible for services under this State Plan.*

*The estimated number of individuals who are expected to become eligible for VR services in SFY 2005 is \_\_\_\_.*

*The Arizona Rehabilitation Services Administration (ARSA) projects that staff will serve and rehabilitate clients as follows in State Fiscal Year 2005. Service costs for each category are included.*

### *Priority Group 1*

*Total to be Served:*

*Total to be Rehabilitated:*

*Service Costs:* \$

### *Priority Group 2*

*Total to be Served:*

*Total to be Rehabilitated:*

*Service Costs:* \$

### *Priority Group 3*

*Total to be Served:*

*Total to be Rehabilitated:*

*Service Costs:* \$

2. *Estimate the number of individuals who will receive services under Part B of Title VI of the Act.*

*ARSA expects to serve \_\_\_\_ individuals*

<b>TOTAL TO BE SERVED</b> <b>TOTAL TO BE REHABILITATED</b>
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## GOALS AND PRIORITIES (updated)

This section, as required by the **VR State Plan Section 4.12(c)**:

- (1) identifies the goals and priorities of the State in carrying out the vocational rehabilitation and supported employment programs and also identifies any revisions in the goals and priorities for any year the State revises the goals and priorities.
- (2) Order of selection.
  - (A) If the State agency is operating on an order of selection, **Attachment 4.12(c)(2)(A)** shows the order to be followed in selecting eligible individuals to be provided vocational rehabilitation services and provides a justification for the order, the service and outcome goals, and the time within which these goals may be achieved for individuals in each priority category consistent with the provisions of paragraph 6.4(c) of this State plan.
  - (B) If, however, the agency assures in paragraph 6.4(a) of this State plan that it can provide the full range of services identified in subsection 5.1 of this State plan to all eligible individuals, **Attachment 4.12(c)(2)(B)** satisfies all of the provisions identified in paragraph 6.4(b) of the State plan.
- (3) Goals and plans for distribution of title VI, part B funds.

**Attachment 4.12(c)(3)** specifies, consistent with subsection 7.4 of the State plan supplement, the State's goals and priorities with respect to the distribution of funds received under section 622 of the Act for the provision of supported employment services.
- (4) **Basis.**

The goals and priorities are based on:

  - (A) the analysis of the comprehensive assessment and any revisions in the assessment consistent with the provisions of paragraph 4.12(a) of this State plan;
  - (B) the performance of the State on the standards and indicators established under section 106 of the Act; and
  - (C) other available information on the operation of the vocational rehabilitation and supported employment programs, including reports from the State Rehabilitation Council, if the State has a Council, and the findings of monitoring activities carried out by the Rehabilitation Services Administration.

(5) In accordance with the provisions of section 101(a)(15)(C)(ii) and (iii) of the Act, the goals and priorities, including any revisions to the goals and priorities, are jointly developed, agreed to, and reviewed annually by the designated State unit and the State Rehabilitation Council, if the State has such a Council.

### (2) *State's Goals and Priorities*

**ARSA and SRC executive teams established these criteria during the Goal and Priority setting phase of the two day strategic planning retreat:**

- Goals will be consistent with our vision, mission, values and principles.
- Goals will be measurable.
- Progress against goals will become a regular reporting item to all staff.
- Measurement of progress against goals will be incorporated into the "ESTEEMS" (performance evaluations) of managers.
- The goal statements are intended for all staff. Managers will have accountability for achieving the performance levels that are set. The specific performance levels will not be used in the counselor/client decision making process.
- Goals will be attainable.

- Goal statements will communicate "passion" and a desire to do/be our best.
- Goal statements are multi-year. Desired performance levels will be for each year.
- ARSA will continue to measure and report VR performance in a number of performance areas (e.g. Federal standards and indicators). These are usually minimum levels and do not represent prioritized goals for ARSA.

## **GOALS**

ARSA's goals, established for the 5 year State Plan, have not substantially changed. The first was rewritten to make the goal a long term goal.

The Objectives to achieve these goals in FFY 2005-2006 are listed below. Accomplishments against last year's Objectives are discussed in 4.12 (e).

***Goal 1: To increase salary levels and improve benefit packages for ARSA staff so that ARSA can effectively compete for and retain qualified staff.***

### **New objectives for SFY2005-2006**

- Continue to transition VR offices to Tech offices by reclassifying vacant positions as they occur.
- Implement a salary plan for counselors, to include a pay differential for those counselors that meet the CSPD requirements.

***Goal 2: To provide exceptional services to VR consumers. "Exceptional services" specifically relates to:***

- 1) The level of the VR consumer's involvement in decision making and making choices;***
- 2) The appropriateness, timeliness, quality, and extent of services received by the consumer; and***
- 3) The consumer's satisfaction with the job obtained as a result of VR services.***

Achievement of this goal will be measured through the use of consistent and ongoing consumer satisfaction surveying conducted by ARSA and SRC.

### **New objectives for SFY2005-2006**

- Continue to maintain customer satisfaction above required levels.
- Continue to develop tools and make policy and procedures changes to increase consumer control for their own rehabilitation while actively participating throughout the rehabilitation process.

***Goal 3: To provide exceptional services to employers, increasing the number and quality of jobs available for persons with disabilities who are clients of the VR program.***

### **New Objectives for SFY2005-2006:**

- ARSA and EA will continue to act as a single point of contact for the Employers Disability Resource Network.

- Continue with electronic referrals from IRIS to VOS. Coordination and follow-up between ARSA and EA.
- Increase the involvement of the navigator at One-Stop Centers to assist in providing disability awareness education to employers as well as marketing the services of the workforce center to persons with disabilities and the agencies that help them.
- Continue to increase feedback from employers by soliciting comments through discussion and evaluation forms as appropriate

***Goal 4: To expand the use of VR program resources to help more consumers (including those currently served and underserved) achieve meaningful jobs.***

***Strategies to be used to accomplish this goal will include increased teamwork and the use of new and creative approaches in delivering client services.***

One benchmark will be employees' satisfaction with their jobs and work environment. During the first year, ARSA will develop baseline (benchmark data).

#### **New Objectives for SFY 2005-2006**

- Continue to look for opportunities to identify additional Tech Offices and implement classification and pay changes, as vacancies occur.
- Continue to work more closely with One Stop Centers by out-stationing staff and engaging in joint activities to increase capacity to serve disabled populations and support grant activities.

***Goal 5: To assist consumers to achieve meaningful and sustained work as effectively and efficiently as possible.***

Achievement of this goal will be measured by:

- 1) The number of rehabilitations achieved each year. Baseline will be the prior year performance and the amount of increases in client service resources during the current year.
- 2) The success ratio achieved (i.e. the # of successful rehabilitants divided by all rehabilitants who received IPE services). Baseline will be both prior year performance and minimum federal performance levels.

#### **Objectives for SFY2005-2006:**

- Continue co-location of WIA One Stop Centers and improving the relationship between ARSA and One Stop Centers by developing referral systems and tools, cross-training, etc.
- Continue to develop, implement and manage agreements between ARSA and Employment Networks which improve the ability of consumers to achieve meaningful jobs.
- Continue to seek additional strategies to improve employment outcomes for VR clients and WIA connection customers.

### **(3) Order of Selection**

The order of selection is an organized, equitable method for serving groups of individuals with disabilities in a priority order if all eligible individuals who apply cannot be served. The criteria used to establish this order of selection are: the number and degree of functional limitations to employment caused by one or more of a variety of disabling conditions in combination with the number of vocational rehabilitation services needed to address these limitations, and the amount of time necessary for completion of services.

**The ARSA maintains the following order of selection:**

**1. Priority Group I. Individuals with the most significant disabilities**

Individuals with severe physical or mental impairments that seriously limits functional capacity in **three or more** major life activities and requires **multiple services** over an extended period of time;

**2. Priority Group II. Individuals with significant disabilities**

Individuals with severe physical or mental impairments that seriously limits functional capacity in **one or more** major life activities and requires **multiple services** over an extended period of time;

**3. Priority Group III. All other eligible individuals**

After consultation with the State Rehabilitation Council and with ARSA's executive management team, ARSA closed services to individuals in Priority Group III starting October 1, 2001.

**Procedures for implementing the Order of Selection**

All individuals continue to be classified into the appropriate Priority Category of the Order of Selection.

For FFY 2005-2006, RSA will continue to develop IPEs and implement services only to individuals in Priority groups I and II. Clients in Priority Group III who were determined eligible prior to October 1, 2001 continue to be served.

Based on the information collected in the case file and coded in the VR Information System (IRIS), the computer assigns each eligible individual to one of the three categories in the Order of Selection at the time an individual has been determined eligible, any needed supplemental assessments have been completed, and the data has been entered into the computer.

**Major elements of the process developed for assigning individuals, who apply to the VR program after October 1, 2001, to a category in the Order of Selection include:**

1. Applicants are informed of the existence of the Order of Selection and its potential impact on services when they apply for services.

2. The counselor next makes the eligibility determination. The counselor certifies the applicant as eligible for the VR program.
3. Assignment to the appropriate Order of Selection category is decided after eligibility has been determined. The information used for the eligibility determination should be discussed with the client. As part of discussing the basis for the eligibility decision with the client and laying the groundwork for IPE planning, the counselor completes the *Health Appraisal and Order of Selection Worksheet* with the client.
4. The counselor enters the results of both the eligibility determination and the *Health Appraisal and Order of Selection Worksheet* into RSA's management information system (IRIS).
5. Based on the results, IRIS assigns the individual to the proper category in the Order of Selection.
6. If soon as it is known, the client's category in the Order of Selection will be noted on the Eligibility Certification.
7. If the counselor feels that additional assessments are necessary when completing the Worksheet, such assessments should be obtained or purchased. The results should be incorporated on the *Health Appraisal and Order of Selection Worksheet* and entered in IRIS. If this results in a change in the individual's priority status, the client must be notified of that change.
8. Final assignment to the appropriate Order of Selection category must be completed prior to the implementation of an IPE.

## GOALS AND PLANS FOR DISTRIBUTION OF TITLE VI, PART B FUNDS

Funds received under Title VI, Part B are distributed for client services in an equitable manner to regions and caseloads statewide. Adjustments to regional or caseload allocations are made regularly based on management/counselor input.

The following data represents supported employment activities in the VR program during the State Fiscal Year 2005-2006

*Number of individuals expressing the need for supported employment prior to IPE	N/A
*Number of individuals identified as needing extended services during the IPE planning process	_____
*Number of individuals closed as rehabilitated in extended services	_____

The Supported Employment program is totally integrated into the VR process. Title VI, Part B monies are available to all staff for use with individuals who will need on-going long term employment support services in an integrated setting earning at least minimum wages.

**STATE'S STRATEGIES AND  
USE OF TITLE I FUNDS FOR INNOVATION AND EXPANSION ACTIVITIES**

This section, as required by **Section 4.12(d) of the VR State Plan**, describes the strategies, including those identified in section 101(a)(15)(D) of the Act and the innovation and expansion activities of paragraph 4.13(a) of this State plan, the designated State agency will use to:

- (1) address the needs identified in the assessment conducted under paragraph (a) of this subsection and achieve the goals and priorities identified in paragraph (c) of this subsection;
- (2) carryout outreach activities to identify and serve individuals with the most significant disabilities who are minorities consistent with the provisions of subsection 7.6 of the State plan supplement; and
- (3) overcome identified barriers relating to equitable access to and participation of individuals with disabilities in the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program and State Supported Employment Services Program.

**(1) *To address Needs Identified in the Comprehensive Assessment and to achieve Identified Goals and Priorities***

*The ARSA will continue to award Program Development contracts to Community Rehabilitation programs:*

*to meet the adjustment needs of individuals with the most significant impairments.*

*to develop new programs to meet the supported employment needs of persons with the most significant disabilities.*

*to provide Assistive Technology goods and services.*

*to meet other needs that have been identified in Section (a)(1)(B), as appropriate.*

*The ARSA provides the SRC with resources to outreach and work with employers who hire clients of the VR Program.*

*The ARSA contracts with, and supports staff participation in, the University of Arizona programs to prepare staff to meet CSPD requirements.*

- (2) *To carry out outreach activities to identify and serve individuals with the most significant disabilities who are minorities,*

*The ARSA continues to recruit and hire minority staff to assist in outreach and to break down barriers.*

*Outreach efforts include:*

- *identifying vendor businesses which are minority owned*
- *participating in a cooperative program (Clear Path) with the City of Phoenix working with disabled inner city youth,*
- *locating VR offices in areas with large minority populations*
- *working with TANF (JOBS)*
- *working extensively with juvenile probation/correction agencies which have large minority populations*
- *working with special projects on Tohono O'odham reservation*

*One of the major goal areas developed by RSA for the next five years is to identify unserved and unserved populations, to establish benchmark information for year 2001, and (based on these) develop specific goals for succeeding years.*

**(3) *To overcome identified barriers relating to equitable access to and participation of individuals with disabilities in the state vocational rehabilitation services program and the state supported employment services program***

*Efforts to overcome identified barriers relating to equitable access to the VR and Supported Employment programs continue to be addressed. Strategies include:*

- *Using the Internet to give more individuals access to VR services;*
- *Working collaboratively with a wide range of community programs and CRPs;*
- *Managing ARSA staff and financial resources to meet needs of unserved and underserved populations;*
- *Establishing resource rooms in all local offices with adapted computers which provides electronic access for persons with disabilities to WIA resources and the Comprehensive Centers;*
- *Making available on the Internet and in Resource Rooms a Policy Summary (FAQ) for Consumers of the VR Program.*

**(4) *To Support the Funding of the SRC and the SILC***

*VR funds are used to pay all of the costs of the State Rehabilitation Council. This includes the salary and ERE costs of both an Executive Director and an administrative secretary. Monies for projects and other costs that are funded include: travel, publications, surveys, supplies, etc.*

*Under contract, VR funds pay the costs of the Statewide Independent Living Council, which is recognized as a not-for-profit organization.*

*The ARSA also turned over responsibility to the SILC for managing the Title VII, Part B monies which currently fund the existing three contracts to develop new Independent Living programs. This responsibility includes making decisions about continuance or modifications to these contracts in the future.*

## **Evaluation and Report of Progress In Achieving Identified Goals and Priorities and Use of Title I Funds For Innovation and Expansion Activities**

The Arizona Rehabilitation Services Administration (ARSA) and the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) have jointly prepared this evaluation report regarding the results of ARSA's progress in achieving its identified goals and priorities.

### **Goal 1: To increase salary levels and improve benefit packages for ARSA staff so that ARSA can effectively compete for and retain qualified staff.**

#### **Objectives for SFY2004-2005**

- Continue to convert staff to new classification changes as vacancies occur and offices are selected to become choice (now known as Tech offices) offices.
- Implement a salary plan for counselors, to include a pay differential for those counselors that meet the CSPD requirements.

#### **Progress towards achieving these Objectives:**

The ARSA has successfully reclassified twenty-two positions to Administrative Assistant II (grade 15), Payment/Purchasing Technicians, and is currently working on reclassifying another 17 positions to the same level. These additional 17 reclassifications will allow ARSA to transition another seven VR offices to the new "tech office" model on a permanent basis.

The ARSA has developed an agreement between new counseling staff and the ARSA that will require new counselors to meet the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) requirements within six years from their date of hire. The agreement received final approval and became effective on May 1, 2004.

The ARSA is currently working on implementing a salary plan that will adjust the salaries of counseling staff that meet the CSPD requirements to the mid-range of the grade or a 5% increase, whichever is greater. As part of the salary plan, the ARSA has also revised the series of counselor classifications to provide for a fair and equitable grade system. In April, 2005, the salary plan proposal was approved by the DES and forwarded to the Arizona Department of Administration.

### **Goal 2: To provide exceptional services to VR consumers.**

#### **"Exceptional services" specifically relates to:**

- 1) The level of the VR consumer's involvement in decision making and making informed choices;**
- 2) The appropriateness, timeliness, quality and extent of services received by the consumer; and**
- 3) The consumer's satisfaction with the job obtained as a result of VR services.**

## Objectives for SFY2004-2005:

- Continue to keep customer satisfaction above required levels.
- Continue to develop tools and make policy and procedures changes to increase consumer control for their own rehabilitation while actively participating throughout the rehabilitation process.

## Progress towards achieving these objectives:

Updated tools have been developed for use by counselors to enable clients to become active participants throughout the rehabilitation process.

- An updated and concise Owner's Guide to Work is provided to applicants, early in the orientation and application process, as a tool to guide the individual through the VR process.
- IPE planning forms, now separate from the IPE, are tools to facilitate active client participation. The *Health Appraisal-Order of Selection Worksheet* is the primary IPE planning tool and reflects the results of all available assessment information. *Identifying a Job or Career Goal* is a new form that is required if the client is developing his/her own IPE.
- The revised IPE is a flexible document which includes all of the major agreements reached between the counselor and the client. It is a versatile document that can be modified throughout the life of the case. Post Employment Services and IPE closure information are separate sections for counselors to use, when relevant.
- Copies of the completed IPE forms are provided to the client for record-keeping.
- Forms are accessible in Spanish, large print and in an electronic version for providers to read aloud or for Braille/tape transcription.

In addition, Policy Instruction Memorandums (PIMS) have transmitted significant policy changes regarding:

- Psychological Evaluations and RSA "No Show" rates
- Implementation of Tech Offices
- Revised IPE and IPE Planning forms

The objective to keep customer satisfaction above required levels is ongoing. Below, the preliminary results from the SFY2005 Consumer Satisfaction Survey are compared to the results of SFY2003. The final results won't be available until the end of June and may change slightly from those reported in April, 2004. Results are not significantly different from last years' results. Although overall satisfaction was measured as 3% higher than last year, these results are not statistically significantly different. The composite dimension of Appropriateness, Timeliness, Quality and Extent of Services rose a little less than 5%, which is a statistically significant increase.

## CONSUMER SATISFACTION RESULTS AS OF 04-18-05

CATEGORY	SFY05 (THROUGH 04-18-2005)	SFY04
1. Overall (All Respondents)	83.1%	80.0%
2. Involvement/Choice (All Respondents)	82.2%	80.0%
3. Approp, Timely, Quality, Extent (26 & 28)	75.2%	70.0%

4. Job Obtained (Status 26)	75.3%	74.0%
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Contract providers continue to provide ARSA with customer satisfaction information, as required by their contracts.

***Goal 3: To provide exceptional services to employers, increasing the number and quality of jobs available for persons with disabilities who are clients of the VR program.***

**Objectives for SFY2004-2005:**

- ARSA and EA will continue to act as a single point of contact for the Employers Disability Resource Network.
- Continue with electronic referrals from IRIS to AWS. Coordination and follow-up between ARSA and EA.
- Increase the involvement of the navigator at One-Stop Centers to assist in providing disability awareness education to employers as well as marketing the services of the workforce center to persons with disabilities and the agencies that help them.
- Continue to increase feedback from employers by soliciting comments through discussion and evaluation forms as appropriate.

**Progress towards achieving these objectives:**

The continued partnership between ARSA and EA is a single point of contact for the Employers Disability Resource Network (EDRN). The ARSA Employment Services Coordinator and the EA Employment Relations Coordinator maintain a continuous and on going relationship for employer related activities. This relationship focuses on a consultation role for both ARSA and EA in the areas of disability awareness, resources and assistive technology for employers.

ARSA attends various community and organizational activities dedicated toward increasing the employment of diverse populations. ARSA and EA jointly attend employer networking meetings and have been involved in joint training presentations.

ARSA participated in Career Expo 2005, sponsored by the Arizona Employers' Advisory Council and put on by the Arizona Workforce Connection/Valley Employment Partnership which consists of the Arizona Department of Economic Security, Maricopa Workforce Connection and the Phoenix Workforce Connection, is identified by the US Department of Labor as being the largest job fair in the United States for the past two years. Over 200 employers participated. ARSA provided information about Vocational Rehabilitation services as well as actual computers, devices and other assistive technology to assist individuals to access employment information. ARSA also coordinated the on-site sign language interpreter service and a Metro transportation bus display which provided information about alternative modes of transportation.

ARSA continues to promote the pre-registration of clients with Job Service giving access to employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. In addition, ARSA received a grant from the Department of Labor to place navigators in the State One-Stop Centers. The navigator assists people with disabilities to access the wide variety of programs available to support their successful entry or re-entry into the workforce and provides disability awareness education to employers.

ARSA attends meetings and trainings of employers throughout the year with the various partners. Immediate feedback is received at the time of the meetings through discussion or evaluation forms distributed and utilized by our partners.

**Goal 4: To expand the use of VR program resources to help more consumers (including those currently served and underserved) achieve meaningful jobs.**

**[Strategies to be used to accomplish this goal will include increased teamwork and the use of new and creative approaches in delivering client services).**

**Objectives for SFY2004-2005**

- Continue to look for opportunities to identify additional choice offices and implement classification and pay changes as vacancies occur.
- Work more closely with One Stop Centers by out-stationing staff and engaging in joint activities to increase capacity to serve disabled populations and support grant activities.

**Progress towards achieving these objectives:**

Based on the experiences of the “pilot offices”, the ARSA has issued an Administrative Information Memorandum (AIM) advising that, over the next four years, all ARSA offices will be transformed into “tech offices”, containing a mixture of professional VR counselors, payment specialists and purchasing specialists. Understanding and meeting the needs of clients is a priority, as is involving all staff as members of a team.

Tech offices shift administrative responsibilities from counselors to other professionals in order to provide more time for counselor/client interaction. This division of labor improves timely delivery of services, accurate recording and reporting of management information, efficient fiscal resources management and improved relationships with vendors.

The ARSA has successfully reclassified twenty-two positions to Administrative Assistant II positions, Payment/Purchasing Technicians, in the tech office mode and is currently working on reclassifying another 17 positions to the same level. These additional 17 reclassifications will allow the ARSA to transition another seven VR offices to the new tech office model on a permanent basis.

Sixteen navigators, located in One Stop Centers throughout the State, have been hired to assist consumers, partners and employers to navigate the One Stop services and resource system. One Stop Centers have welcomed the navigators and accepted them as One Stop Center employees. The navigators attempt to remove barriers to persons with disabilities who wish to apply for employment services. Cross training of staff on accessibility, disability awareness, community resources and ADA regulations has been ongoing.

As ARSA is moving in the direction of greater customer control and involvement by continuing to identify appropriate tools for the implementation of tech offices, our management information system (IRIS) continues to be modified to support these changes. This involves changes in training, security levels, coding, division of labor, etc., to support the division of labor in tech offices. IRIS has also been modified to: be more streamlined, provide greater flexibility, reduce the number of codes, relax some edits and provide greater access to reports.

For SFY2005, 66% of respondents (ARSA staff) agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with their jobs overall. This is comparable to the overall satisfaction rating obtained in SFY2004 of 65%.

These figures are not statistically significantly different.

## **Goal 5: To assist consumers to achieve meaningful and sustained work as effectively and efficiently as possible**

### **Objectives for SFY2004-2005:**

- Implement new counselor performance evaluation document which contains set successful rehabilitation outcome goals and describes each counselor's strategies (objectives) to reach their goals.
- Continue co-location of WIA One Stop Centers and improving the relationship between ARSA and One Stop Centers by developing referral systems, referral tools, cross-training, etc.
- Continue to develop, implement and manage agreements between ARSA and Employment Networks which improve the ability of consumers to achieve meaningful jobs.
- Continue to look for additional strategies to improve employment outcomes for VR clients.

### **Progress towards achieving these objectives:**

#### ***One Stop Center Related Activities 2005:***

Funding for the Disability Program Navigators (DPN) was awarded for the second year. The expansion of navigators at the One Stop Centers has been very successful at raising awareness of accessibility, accommodations, assistive technology, and system changes for the inclusion of persons with disabilities. There are now 16 navigator positions, due to the combined efforts of the local communities and RSA to have establishment grants, which allowed growth in Santa Cruz County (Nogales) and in Gila and Pinal Counties. The grants have assisted in making buildings accessible and in promoting strong relationships with the 17 core partners, including youth programs and improvement of services to persons with disabilities. Yuma County has a shared position that has improved relationships with WIA partners, local businesses and private employers who participate in a collaborative effort to serve the public.

An RSA grant to Arizona Center for Blind and Visual Impairment (ACBVI) has been successful to fine tune the link with the community by offering six training sessions (i.e. General Disability Awareness; Assistive Technology; Legal Aspects and Accessibility; Blindness; Deafness and Hard of Hearing; Cultural and Ethical Approaches for Persons with Disabilities) at the One Stop Centers. The trainings have been well received, well attended and effective, while sharing knowledge and information with One Stop staff, community providers and local employers. The large urban One Stop Centers have had difficulty scheduling the trainings because of the need for other trainings and inadequate staff coverage for the One Stop Centers. Attempts to schedule the trainings off-site have not been well received or well attended. The team of community professionals is attempting to schedule small, shorter sessions in efforts to reach the One Stop Center staff.

Memos of Understanding (MOU) amendments have been updated. Establishment Grants have been changed to Intergovernmental Agreements to insure that funding for the navigators will be available for a three year period. Funding from DOL/SSA is effective through June, 2006. The RSA report to DOL indicates that 16 more states will be given grants for DPN Projects. The added navigators will bring the total number of states with navigators to 33. The discussion nationally has been the improvement of relationships with consumers and partners. Arizona has been very willing to share and build strong relationships to provide better services to all consumers at One Stops Career Centers. The navigators are

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working with benefits planning assistance and outreach (BPA&O) professionals to bring services and information into the One Stop Centers. Navigators are going to local mental health offices, SSA offices, JOBS, the Division of Developmental Disabilities, employment networks, literacy programs, colleges and universities, job developers, youth programs, high school transition programs, job fairs, disability expositions, information fairs and other organizations that work with or provide services to persons with disabilities to invite them to visit and to learn about the One Stop Centers.

Technology and equipment needs, to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) and WIA "Access for All" are in effect. The Navigator Grant has helped the One Stop Centers to share equipment, to upgrade computers/software and to meet legal requirements for the sharing of software, to provide training on the use of adaptive equipment, and to explore ideas in order to meet and/or exceed minimum requirements. The team of community professionals has found issues of security, loss of expensive equipment, lack of and/or misuse of equipment, and maintenance of assistive technology to be costly problems. A major achievement, but still a work in progress, is the building of a new website, [www.atarizona.com](http://www.atarizona.com). This website is user friendly, indicates the location of specific AT equipment, and takes consumers to links for all the One Stop Centers. Staff can complete an intake on-line with Virtual One Stop (VOS), and the site can be accessed in alternative formats. The community has complained that finding appropriate assistive technology at the One Stop Centers has been very difficult. The new website will be available to the public and will be a means of providing contact to experts within the field of assistive technology.

The Navigator Grant, WIA programs, RSA and Employment Networks are working hard to remove barriers to employment. Employers are involved through special programs, and navigators are participating on employer committees and councils to inform the community of the network of services available to individuals with disabilities.

### ***Ticket to Work***

The Ticket to Work program, linked to employment activity at ARSA, Workforce Connection, the navigator program and the expansion of Employment Networks, has not been fully realized. The number of Tickets mailed to SSA beneficiaries has reached 188,000 Arizonans. The actual number of tickets assigned to Employment Networks, including ARSA, has reached 1100. Although the number is a small percentage for the program, more and more beneficiaries are calling for information about the Ticket to Work and other SSA incentive programs. A marketing program was promised to three states to help renew interest in work incentives to help consumers to work. Many Employment Networks have stopped taking tickets. The changes in payment and reimbursement have become limiting and complex. ARSA has attempted to recruit the WIA Workforce Connection programs to become Employment Networks. The navigators have been ambassadors for benefits planning (BPA&O) groups, as consumers receiving SSA benefits are a growing population of about 3,000-5,000 individuals annually. ARSA and EN partners like Gompers, Arizona Bridge to Independent Living (ABIL), Goodwill Industries, Blake Foundation, Gila Employment Service WIA, Tetra (Beacon) and others have tried to be informative, but most referrals are going to the ARSA program. Nationally, 95% of all Tickets are assigned to RSA programs.

The Ticket to Work Medicaid Buy-in Program should be recognized as the leading commitment to remove barriers and fears so that Social Security beneficiaries can return to work. Employers' efforts to provide assistance and opportunity for employment are also keys to success. Removing barriers to employment is often inexpensive. The ENs are making an impact on the community and the economy through creative programming and dedication to serve special populations. The number of employees in

RSA that are severely disabled, but gainfully employed, has been on the increase. RSA, DOL, SSA, WIA and the other partners are providing quality services, removing barriers and building strong relationships to improve accessibility and system changes for special populations in work activities.

SSA has provided the Area Workforce Investment Coordinator (AWIC) to be a resource to resolve conflict with local offices. The relationship with the AWIC has been successful to resolve appeal issues and to prevent lengthy hearings and appeals. Our Arizona AWIC is a great addition to our team of community professionals that are striving to provide opportunities for people with disabilities to prepare for, secure and maintain employment.

Future plans contain program expansion, with expected funding for the third year, to include: Native American WIA programs, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), additional youth programs, continued AT improvements, EN expansion, and an increase in the number of consumers with disabilities in the One Stop Centers. The goal is to increase successful rehabilitation to transition beneficiaries from SSA benefits into substantial gainful employment.

## ***Use Of Title 1 Funds For Innovation And Expansion Activities***

ARSA continues to significantly support ongoing program development activities to address needs identified in the assessment, to carry out outreach activities to identify and serve individuals with the most significant disabilities and to overcome barriers relating to equitable access to and participation of individuals with disabilities.

ARSA conducted a survey in the Spring of 2003 to identify current program development needs. The resulting list of needs included, but was not limited to, the following:

- Transportation, statewide, and especially in rural areas;
- Education of employers regarding the hiring and employment of persons with disabilities;
- Need for more entry level jobs, specific issues of finding employment for persons who are deaf-blind and for persons with felony convictions, and competition for lower end jobs from non-disabled individuals;
- Need for more ongoing employment supports;
- Pre-vocational skills training;
- Situational assessment sites.

**Based on this input and a follow-up survey of field managers, ARSA used the information to develop a Request for Grant Applications (RFGA) in SFY 2004, using the following priorities:**

1. Programs to develop coordinated transportation resources for VR clients needing to travel back and forth to training or employment. The purpose of these projects is primarily to develop methods or systems to coordinate and maximize the use of existing transportation resources, but may include the purchase of vehicles.
2. Programs benefiting behavioral health consumers who are applicants or participants of the Vocational Rehabilitation directed at one or more of the following goals.

The purpose of these projects is to create competitive integrated employment opportunities for persons with a serious mental illness. "Integrated setting" is defined as: A setting typically found in the community in which applicants or eligible individuals interact with non-disabled individuals who are providing services to those applicants or eligible individuals, to the same extent that non-disabled individuals with comparable positions interact with other persons. "Competitive" means that individuals will earn at least minimum wages.

- To develop and expand partnerships with business/industries (including National Industries for the Severely Handicapped-NISH) that will result in training and integrated employment opportunities (or direct placements) in specified employment sectors.
- To develop a consumer-run retail, service or manufacturing business.

A consumer-run business must be primarily run by consumers. The consumer-run operation may be part of a larger agency/business that provides training, technical and administrative support and assistance to the consumer-run organization or be assisted by the non-profit or public agency.

- To assist individuals with Serious Mental Illnesses to work in entry level professional positions.

RSA envisions such positions to include, but not be limited to: job coaches, job developers, case managers and/or eligibility workers. Assistance could include: educational counseling; provision of preparatory training/education; supported education services while individuals are in training/education; identification of employment opportunities and recruitment of individuals with SMI for such jobs; provision of intensive supports to individuals with SMI and to the agencies who hire them.

- To develop a training program for employees of public agencies, such as fire or police departments, on how to work effectively and correctly with persons with severe mental illnesses (SMI) in crisis situations (where such training may not be currently available or such cooperation doesn't currently exist), to deliver such training, and to create ongoing links between fire and police departments and local agencies serving persons with SMI.

RSA envisions local community rehabilitation providers in rural Arizona assessing local needs, obtaining commitments from participating organizations, developing a training program, providing this training, and creating ongoing links between local Community Rehabilitation Program providers, RBHA agencies, Vocational Rehabilitation program staff and local police and fire department personnel. A major cause for loss of jobs by persons with severe mental illnesses is entanglements with law enforcement personnel. A greater sensitivity to needs of persons with SMI and a greater cooperation between agencies that serve this population can reap benefits for all and save many jobs for VR clients after they are employed.

3. Programs to increase the employment of individuals with disabilities with community employers directed at one or both of the following goals:

- To coordinate resources available to community employers in the recruitment, hiring and retention of individuals with disabilities.

RSA envisions one or more project(s) to coordinate community employers' access to methods and resources: (a) to identify recruit, hire and retain persons with significant disabilities in employment; (b) to help employers to make working environments accessible to persons with disabilities; and (c) to train/educate managers, supervisors and fellow employees on disability and disability issues on behalf of, and working with, the "Employment Disability Resources Network" (a consortium comprised of RSA/VR, AZ Job Service, Community Rehabilitation Program providers, the AZ Business Leadership Network and the Arizona Rehabilitation Council).

- To provide a forum for regular interaction between RSA management and community employers.

RSA envisions these projects as developing an ongoing mechanism to develop, coordinate and manage regular and meaningful interactions between RSA decision makers and community employers.

4. Programs benefiting persons who are blind or visually impaired directed at one or more of the following goals, separately or together:

- To develop, expand, or improve a comprehensive adjustment services program for transition high school students who are blind or visually impaired to include:
  - Rehabilitation Instructional Services

- Adjustment to Disability
- Assistive Technology Services/Equipment
- College Preparation

RSA envisions that services provided through such a program will result in a seamless transition from high school to Vocational Rehabilitation. Rehabilitation Instructional Services, Adjustment to Disability, assistive technology services, and college preparation (where appropriate), when provided in a coordinated and comprehensive manner, will expedite a student's progress towards achieving economic self-sufficiency through work.

These services should result in the student having the necessary adaptive skills and the self confidence to be successful in employment or in post secondary education/skill training.

The services under this goal could be combined with those under Goal 3; vocational readiness, work exploration, and trial employment program, to make an even more comprehensive service delivery system.

- To develop, expand, or improve a comprehensive adjustment service program for adults who are blind or visually impaired to include;
  - Rehabilitation Instructional Services
  - Adjustment to Disability
  - Assistive Technology Services/Equipment

RSA envisions that when Rehabilitation Instructional Services, Adjustment to Disability, and Assistive Technology Services are provided in a coordinated and efficient manner, clients will complete these services in a much shorter period of time. This will, in turn, expedite the client's achievement of his/her vocational goal.

In some instances where these services are already available, this might be achieved by adding just a coordination function that would allow clients to receive all services in a coordinated manner. In other instances, an agency might have to add one or more services to develop the necessary service array as well as adding a coordination function.

The services under this goal could be combined with services under Goal 3; vocational readiness, work exploration, and trial employment program, to make a even more comprehensive service delivery system.

- To develop, expand, or improve a vocational readiness, work exploration, trial employment, specific job training program designed specifically for adults and/or transition students who are blind or visually impaired.

RSA envisions that one or more of the following services will be combined to provide a comprehensive career exploration program: assessments to determine aptitude, interests and abilities; career exploration activities including job shadowing and work experience; vocational guidance and counseling; instruction in conducting labor market surveys, completing applications, developing a resume, interviewing skills, trial employment and specific job training.

The services under this goal could be combined with the Goals 1 or 2 which deal with comprehensive adjustment services.

5. Programs to make One Stop Workforce Development Centers a viable and significant resource for persons with disabilities. Projects that will be considered for funding include, but are not limited to:
  - Hiring and training disability specialists/coordinators to work within One Stop Workforce Development Centers.
  - Creating and supporting a cross-disability resource center/program (e.g. self-help peer support groups, disability benefits counseling, management of IRWEs, PASS plans, a staffed resource center, etc.) for persons with disabilities within the One Stop Center.
  - Creating and/or supporting transportation resources to make One Stop services available to persons with disabilities who have transportation needs.
6. One program each within the southern, central and northern regions of the state which will create an ongoing resource to RSA counselors in the area of rehabilitation technology for clients of the VR program. This resource will be a partnership with the VR counselor.

Projects will include a package of services to include:

- (a) developing, maintaining, and providing general resource information for easy access by counselors and VR clients;
- (b) \*”general” rehabilitation technology assessments,
- (c) technical assistance (both general and specific client issues),
- (d) development, coordination and convening teams of experts, as necessary, to solve specific client issues, and/or
- (e) referrals to appropriate vendors (within the full range of rehabilitation engineering, assistive technology services, and assistive technology devices) to implement rehabilitation technology plans.

\*”General” rehabilitation technology assessments are at a level sufficient to understand the problem and the issues involved. These assessments must be thorough enough to make recommendations to the VR counselor, but they are not at a level of thoroughness necessary for providing or leading to a prescription. Supplemental evaluations from community providers in specific areas would be recommended and used for such evaluations.

7. Programs to update and improve Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP) provider facility programs to keep them competitive and a viable and significant resource for persons with disabilities who are clients of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR). Project goals that will be considered for funding include, but are not limited to, expansion of current programs to provide work activities or work exposure in areas such as clerical, secretarial, customer service, janitorial, etc.
8. Programs to develop a system of supports for juveniles, who are both in juvenile correction or the probation system and are clients of the VR program, to increase the chances of successfully completing a program of VR services and maintaining employment.

RSA envisions a community provider developing a program of social work and counseling supports and intervention strategies to increase the odds of youths, who have been referred to the VR program

and are participating in services under an Individualized Plan for Employment, to complete high schools, complete their VR program, and to enter and maintain employment.

**As a result of this RFGA, grants were awarded in priority need categories, as follows:**

(There were not approvable applications for all eligible grant areas)

### **ESTABLISHMENT GRANT AWARDS**

<b>Organization Receiving Award</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Category of award</b>	<b>Description of Project</b>
Community Outreach Program for the Deaf	Statewide	Workforce Investment	Project will install video technology in One-Stops and at employer sites to allow for remote interpreting for individual who are deaf
Santa Cruz County One Stop	Santa Cruz County	Workforce Investment	Project will create large disability focus in the Santa Cruz One-Stop and create transportation capability for individual with disabilities.
Gila Employment	Gila County	Workforce Investment	Project is creating Disability Navigator in the Gila County One-Stop and increase capacity for community employment of persons with disabilities.
Arizona Bridge to Independent Living	Maricopa County	Workforce Investment	Phase I grant to develop strategy to increase Disability Navigators in One-Stops currently with out Navigators
Helping Hands	Northern Coconino County and the western Navajo Reservation	Transportation	Project will create a transportation for system individuals with disabilities in an around Page AZ. To include the western part of the Navajo Reservation
Beacon Group (Custodial)	Tucson	Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP)	Project will increase capability of the CRP to compete for state set-aside projects and increase employment opportunities for individuals with the most significant disabilities.
Centers for Habilitation/TCH (Custodial)	Tucson	CRP	Project will increase capability of the CRP to compete for state set-aside projects and increase employment opportunities for individuals with the most significant disabilities.
Centers for Habilitation/TCH (Packaging)	Maricopa County	CRP	Project will increase capability of the CRP to compete for state set-aside projects and increase employment opportunities for individuals with the most significant disabilities.
Douglas ARC (Janitorial)	Southeast Arizona	CRP	Project will increase capability of the CRP to compete for state set-aside projects and increase employment opportunities for individuals with the most significant

			disabilities.
Douglas ARC (Grounds keeping)	Southeast Arizona	CRP	Project will increase capability of the CRP to compete for state set-aside projects and increase employment opportunities for individuals with the most significant disabilities.
Graham County ARC	Southeast Arizona	CRP	Project will increase capability of the CRP to compete for state set-aside projects and increase employment opportunities for individuals with the most significant disabilities.
Yuma WORC	Yuma area	CRP	Project will establish a consumer run silk screening business and will become a consumer run small business incubator
Quality Connections	Flagstaff area	CRP	Project will expand CPR's business project (copier toner cartridge remanufacture) to create new job categories for both training and employment.
Blake (Janitorial)	Tucson area	CRP	Project will increase capability of the CRP to compete for state set-aside projects and increase employment opportunities for individuals with the most significant disabilities.
Goodwill (Temporary Employment Services)	Maricopa County	CRP	Project will create a Temp Employment Agency designed for individuals with disabilities who chose that employment option
Coyote Task Force (Café 54)	Tucson area	Serious Mental Illness (SMI)	Project creates a consumer run business. This will be an upscale café in the heart of downtown Tucson.
Beacon Group (Paper Shredding)	Tucson area	SMI	Project will increase capability of the CRP to compete for state set-aside projects and increase employment opportunities for individuals with the most significant disabilities.
La Frontera Center	Tucson area	SMI	Project expands the capacity of employment and employment support services that will be delivered inside the recovery model.
META (Job Coaching)	Phoenix area	SMI	Project creates a training program for persons with serious mental illness to become job coaches.
Pinal Gila Behavioral Health (Pinal Hispanic Council)	Pinal County	SMI	Project establishes the capacity for the Pinal Hispanic Council to offer employment and employment support opportunities to individuals with serious mental illness.
Department of Health Services/ State Hospital	Statewide	SMI	Project establishes a consumer run gift shop on the state hospital grounds to serve as an employment training program for soon to be released patients.

Coyote Task Force (Our Place Clubhouse)	Tucson area	SMI	Project expands the capacity of the Fountain House Model clubhouse to create employment and employment support opportunities for individuals with serious mental illness.
SEABHS (Partnership in Training)	Southeast Arizona	SMI	Project creates the capacity to provide sensitivity and best practice (for persons with SMI) training to law enforcement and emergency medical personal in Southeastern Arizona.
Direct (Training at Nursing Home)	Tucson area	SMI	Project creates a job training and peer mentoring opportunity for persons with serious mental illness. It also affords long term nursing home patients with visits and outside relationships.
NARBHA (Tailgate Café)	White Mountain Apache Reservation	SMI	Project creates a consumer run business (café) on the White Mountain Apache Reservation at White river.
NARBHA (Upholstery/Bicycle Repair)	Winslow Area	SMI	Project expands two consumer run business to allow for additional employment and training opportunities for individuals with serious mental illness.
NARBHA (Peer Mentor Training)	Flagstaff Area	SMI	Phase I grant to develop strategy to create peer mentoring program with Department clients who have serious mental illness, are victims of domestic violence and receive TANF services
Direct (One Stop)	Tucson Area	SMI	Phase I grant to develop a strategy for One-Stops in Southeastern Arizona to create a capacity to serve individuals with serious mental illness.
MARC Center	East Valley	SMI	Phase I grant to create meaningful job training opportunities or consumer run business in Maricopa County.
Arizona Center for the Blind	Statewide	Assistive Technology (AT)	Project will create and extensive website clearing house for the use by AT staff and other professionals to post resources and other technical information. This project will also provide technical assistance on assistive technology to the State's One-Stop system and RSA resource rooms.
Easter Seals (Training/Consulting Team)	Central and Southern Arizona	AT	This project will provide technical assistance and consultation to VR counseling staff in their geographical area. The project will also collaborate on the website.
Northern Arizona University	Northern Arizona	AT	This project will provide technical assistance and consultation to VR counseling staff in their geographical area. The project will also collaborate on the website.

Foundation for the Blind (AT Consultation)	Central Arizona	AT	This project will provide technical assistance and consultation to VR counseling staff in their geographical area. The project will also collaborate on the website.
Arizona Center for the Blind	Phoenix Area	Blindness	This project targets blind and visual impaired adults by expanding the capacity to provide adjustment and creating capacity for work readiness services and career development services.
Southern Arizona Association (Independence)	Tucson Area	Blindness	This project targets youth and creates a two week summer residential program by focusing on adjustment to blindness.
Southern Arizona Association (PREP)	Tucson Area	Blindness	This project targets adults and establishes new community based work adjustment and job training sites
Foundation for the Blind (not AT Consultation)	Statewide	Blindness	Adults – The project expands capacity for rehabilitation teaching, orientation and mobility, and blindness adjustment services. It develops an on-line training program for assistive technology that targets rural areas.  Youth – The project creates career exploration service, textbook transcription, a summer residential college prep experience, and expands the summer youth independent living program.
Arizona Orientation and Adjustment Center	Statewide	Blindness	Phase I grant to explore the feasibility of an Arizona residential adjustment center for individuals who are blind.
Arizona Bridge to Independent Living	Phoenix Area	TANF	Project will create capacity to deliver employment services to TANF participants with disabilities who are currently deferred or close to being deferred from work participation.

All Establishment Grants which requested continuation were approved to continue into their second year. Revised budgets have been received from all grantees and are being processed.

## **MEDIATION AND IMPARTIAL DUE PROCESS HEARING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

*The section contains the procedures for mediation; the procedures for review through an Impartial Due Process Hearing; and, the procedures to seek an impartial review of the decision of the hearing officer, including the standards for reviewing decisions of an hearing officer, if the designated State agency has elected to implement such review procedures as required by Section 4.16(b)(2) of the VR State plan.*

### **MEDIATION**

Mediation will be offered as an additional option for consumers. The ARSA has an intergovernmental agreement (contract) with the State's Attorney General's Office, Conflict Resolution Section. This section provides mediation services to a number of State agencies and other organizations, including the Department of Education. They are well-placed to provide this service as they have a cadre of over 400 trained volunteers statewide.

The contract includes provisions for training. The Conflict Resolution Section will provide training to supervisors and counselors throughout the State about the mediation process. Training to the mediators will be provided jointly by ARSA staff and the State Rehabilitation Council.

The State will bear the cost of the mediation process.

The ARSA has established the following policies and procedures for mediation.

#### **THE MEDIATION PROCESS:**

When a conflict, or a potential conflict, arises:

1. The counselor or consumer will be encouraged to identify such conflicts as early as possible, before issues escalate.
2. Either the client or the counselor can contact the Central Office liaison immediately when there is an issue, or may potentially become an issue, that needs resolution. The liaison will consult with both the client and the counselor, the supervisor, and the RSA Regional Manager immediately.

Involvement of the supervisor or regional manager is to determine whether a solution is immediately possible (NOTE: this review constitutes the informal Administrative Review), i.e.:

- i. To determine if there is a misapplication of policy or procedure by the counselor that, if corrected, will resolve the problem;
- ii. To decide whether there ought to be a re-assignment of counselors (when a fresh perspective might solve the conflict or when a broken relationship appears to be the primary issue);

- iii. To identify other options which might resolve the issue, or
- iv. To determine if the situation is one in which the supervisor or manager has the authority, in policy, to make exceptions to policies or procedures based on unique circumstances.

The purpose of the consultation by the Central Office liaison is to:

- v. Help the counselor and the client determine what process is the most appropriate route to resolve the situation: resolution of issues at the supervisory/manager level, a mediation process, or an impartial due process hearing process.
- vi. Recommend whether to pursue mediation, the Impartial Due Process Hearing, or resolution by supervisor/manager. Recommendations are made as follows:
  - a. Mediation –
    - (1) The issue is primarily relational in nature (lack of trust, poor communication, personality conflicts).
    - (2) The issue may be amenable to creative problem solving, looking at other solutions, better understanding of the issues, etc.
  - b. Appeal –
    - (1) Creative problem solving, increased communication, etc. are not the solution.
    - (2) The issue is a clear conflict about program policies and interpretations thereof.

Both the consumer and the counselor have an option of choosing the mediation or the impartial due process hearing. **If, after an informal review by the RSA manager, there is not a consensus by both to try mediation, the Impartial Due Process Hearing will be scheduled.**

- 3. The Central Office consultant/liaison will notify the AG's "Conflict Resolution Section" of the need for a mediator and will provide pertinent information. The Conflict Resolution Coordinator will schedule the mediation with the counselor and the client at a mutually convenient time and place and will send both the counselor and client information prepared by the AG's office.
- 4. When scheduling the mediation, the AG's office will automatically also schedule an impartial due process hearing. The scheduling of the Impartial Due Process Hearing will be done enough time in advance to allow the mediation process to be completed. If the mediation is successful and acceptable, the Impartial Due Process Hearing will be cancelled.
- 5. A list of individuals who are qualified mediators and knowledgeable in laws (including regulations) relating to the provision of Vocational Rehabilitation services will be made available to consumers.

6. The consumer can bring a representative. The counselor is encouraged to select a peer or senior counselor to bring to the mediation. The reason for having others involved is to help both parties look at all the options and to help them find creative solutions.
7. If the mediation results in a mediation agreement, the agreement will be reviewed by the Central Office consultant/liaison to make sure it is consistent with law/policy.
  - If **yes**, the agreement is implemented.
  - If **not**, the issue is referred for the Impartial Due Process Hearing, if the consumer requests further action/appeal.

## **MEDIATION POLICIES**

### **1. Notification**

#### **(A) Rights and assistance**

An applicant or an eligible individual or, as appropriate, the applicant's representative or individual's representative will be notified of--

- (i)** the right to obtain review of determinations in an Impartial Due Process Hearing;
- (ii)** the right to pursue mediation with respect to the determinations subject to Due Process Hearings;
- (iii)** the opportunity for an informal resolution of the issue; and
- (iv)** the availability of assistance from the Client Assistance Program.

#### **(B) Timing**

Notification of these rights of clients will be provided in writing--

- (i)** at the time an individual applies for vocational rehabilitation services;
- (ii)** at the time the Individualized Plan for Employment for the individual is developed; and
- (iii)** upon reduction, suspension, or termination of Vocational Rehabilitation services for the individual.

### **2. Client Options**

Parties to any dispute will continue to have the right to informally resolve the dispute prior to Mediation or Due Process Hearings, as long as the informal process used is not used to deny or delay the right of the applicant or eligible individual to a hearing or to deny any other right afforded under laws regulating the VR program.

### **3. Evidence And Representation**

The mediation procedures--

- (A)** provide an opportunity for an applicant or an eligible individual, or, as appropriate, the applicant's representative or individual's representative, to submit evidence and information at the mediation session to support the position of the

applicant or eligible individual; and

- (B) include provisions to allow an applicant or an eligible individual to be represented in the mediation session or hearing by a person selected by the applicant or eligible individual.

#### 4. Mediation

- (A) Procedures  
Policies will ensure that clients involved in disputes will be offered an opportunity to resolve such disputes through a mediation process whenever a Full Due Process Hearing is requested.
- (B) Requirements  
Policies will ensure that the mediation process--
  - (i) is voluntary on the part of the parties;
  - (ii) is not used to deny or delay the right of an individual to a hearing, or to deny any other right afforded under laws regulating the VR program; and
  - (iii) is conducted by a qualified and impartial mediator who is trained in effective mediation techniques.
- (C) Scheduling  
Each session in the mediation process will be scheduled in a timely manner and will be held in a location that is convenient to the parties to the dispute.
- (D) Agreement  
An agreement reached by the parties to the dispute in the mediation process will be contained in a written mediation agreement.
- (E) Confidentiality  
Discussions that occur during the mediation process will be confidential and will not be used as evidence in any subsequent due process hearing or civil proceeding. The parties to the mediation process may be required to sign a confidentiality pledge prior to the commencement of such process.

## **REVIEW THROUGH AN IMPARTIAL DUE PROCESS HEARING**

Any applicant or eligible individual or, if appropriate, the individual's representative who is dissatisfied with any determinations made by a rehabilitation counselor or coordinator concerning the furnishing or denial of services may request a timely review of those determinations.

### **(a) Informal resolution.**

The informal process cannot delay an individual's access to a Formal Due Process Hearing. If informal resolution is not successful, a formal hearing will be conducted by the end of this same period, unless the parties agree to a specific extension of time.

### **(b) Formal impartial due process hearing procedures.**

The State unit has formal review procedures that provide that--

- (1) A hearing by an impartial hearing officer is held within 60 days of an individual's request for review, unless informal resolution is achieved prior to the 60th day or the parties agree to a specific extension of time;
- (2) The agency will not institute a suspension, reduction, or termination of services being provided under an IPE pending a final determination of the formal impartial due process hearing, or informal resolution, unless the individual or, in an appropriate case, the individual's representative so requests or the agency has evidence that the services have been obtained through misrepresentation, fraud, collusion, or criminal conduct on the part of the individual;
- (3) The individual or, if appropriate, the individual's representative is afforded an opportunity to present additional evidence, information, and witnesses to the impartial hearing officer, to be represented by counsel or other appropriate advocate, and to examine all witnesses and other relevant sources of information and evidence;
- (4) The impartial hearing officers are instructed to make a decision based on the provisions of the approved State plan, the Act, Federal vocational rehabilitation regulations, and State regulations and policies that are consistent with Federal requirements and to provide to the individual or, if appropriate, the individual's representative and to the ARSA Administrator a full written report of the findings and grounds for the decision within 30 days of the completion of the hearing;
- (5) If the ARSA Administrator decides to review the decision of the impartial hearing officer, the Administrator shall notify in writing the individual or, if appropriate, the individual's representative of that intent within 20 days of the mailing of the impartial hearing officer's decision;

- (6) If the ARSA Administrator fails to provide the notice required, the impartial hearing officer's decision becomes a final decision;
- (7) The decision of the ARSA Administrator to review any impartial hearing officer's decision must be based on standards of review contained in written State unit policy;
- (8) If the ARSA Administrator decides to review the decision of the impartial hearing officer, the Administrator provides the individual or, if appropriate, the individual's representative an opportunity to submit additional evidence and information relevant to the final decision;
- (9) The Administrator will not overturn or modify a decision, or part of a decision, of an impartial hearing officer that supports the position of the individual unless the Administrator concludes, based on clear and convincing evidence, that the decision of the impartial hearing officer is clearly erroneous because it is contrary to the approved State plan, the Act, Federal vocational rehabilitation regulations, or State regulations or policies that are consistent with Federal requirements;
- (10) Within 30 days of providing notice of intent to review the impartial hearing officer's decision, the ARSA Administrator makes a final decision and provides a full report in writing of the decision, including the findings and the statutory, regulatory, or policy grounds for the decision, to the individual or, if appropriate, the individual's representative;
- (11) The ARSA Administrator does not delegate responsibility to make any final decision to any other officer or employee of the designated State unit; and
- (12) The ARSA's review procedures provide for reasonable time extensions for good cause shown at the request of a party or at the request of both parties.

**(c) Selection of impartial hearing officers.**

- (1) From among the pool of persons qualified to be an impartial hearing officer who are identified jointly by the ARSA and members of the State Rehabilitation Council; and
- (2) Selected
  - (i) On a random basis; or
  - (ii) By agreement between the ARSA Administrator and the individual or, if appropriate, the individual's representative.

**(e) Informing affected individuals.**

The State unit informs, through appropriate modes of communication, all applicants and eligible individuals of--

- (1) Their right to a impartial due process review, including the names and addresses of individuals with whom appeals may be filed; and
- (2) The manner in which an impartial hearing officer will be selected (see above).

**(f) Data collection.**

The ARSA Administrator collects and submits, at a minimum, required data to the Secretary for inclusion each year in the annual report to Congress:

- (1) The number of appeals to impartial hearing officers and the State director, including the type of complaints and the issues involved.
- (2) The number of decisions by the State director reversing in whole or in part a decision of the impartial hearing officer.
- (3) The number of decisions affirming the position of the dissatisfied individual assisted through the Client Assistance Program, when that assistance is known to the State unit.

## **SERVICES SUBJECT TO FINANCIAL NEED**

Arizona Revised Statute 23-506 governs eligibility for vocational rehabilitation services at public cost. It states in part that the following vocational rehabilitation services shall be provided only to persons determined to have financial need. Financial need means that a client's gross monthly income does not exceed the monthly income levels presented in the Economic Need Chart. The Economic Need Chart is based on 100 percent of the Estimated State Median Income for Arizona published by the Federal Office of Community Services, updated annually.

1. Physical and mental restoration services (including adaptive aids and devices)
2. Transportation other than that provided to determine eligibility, IPE planning, and adjustment to disability services;
3. Vehicle modifications;
4. Occupational licenses and Certifications;
5. Customary occupational tools/computers and equipment;
6. Maintenance other than that provided to determine eligibility and the nature and extent of services needed;
7. Books, tools, computers, software, tape recorders and materials for training when purchased separately from tuition.
8. Child care.

ARSA maintains written policies covering the determination of financial need. Procedures are in place to ensure that policies are applied consistently and uniformly. The Economic Need Chart is updated annually by ARSA for its policy manual.

## **QUALITY, SCOPE, AND EXTENT OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES (amended)**

The Arizona Rehabilitation Services Administration (ARSA) (with the help of agreements with both the Division of Developmental Disabilities and the Department of Health Services for long term extended supported employment services) is able to initiate Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) service plans for individuals who need Supported Employment.

In addition, with limited Social Services Block Grant monies, the ARSA is able to initiate Supported Employment services for a small number of persons with other very significant disabilities and also pay for their extended supported employment needs in order to maintain employment successfully.

### **QUALITY OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES**

The ARSA has been involved with supported employment since receipt of the Supported Employment systems change grant in 1985. Efforts over the years have consistently focused on maintaining options for individuals with severe disabilities and promotion of efforts to move individuals from more restrictive (sheltered workshops) to less restrictive and more integrated environments (competitive employment in the community with/without extended employment supports).

The ARSA has used several strategies to promote more integrated and less restrictive employment environments for clients (with the most severe disabilities) of the VR program as follows:

- The ARSA changed its payment incentive system to reward community rehabilitation program providers for successful integrated, competitive, fulltime placements which provide medical/ hospitalization benefits.
- The ARSA works with CRP providers to improve the service delivery systems as follows:

Extensive technical assistance and training is provided to CRP staff in the areas of supported employment philosophy, job coaching, the ADA, hiring qualified staff, marketing, and technological assistance based on needs identified by CRP providers.

ARSA has designated training staff to assist in the training needed by community providers. In addition, ARSA collaborates with Region IX Rehabilitation Continuing Education Program (RCEP) and the University of Arizona to plan and implement continuing education to community rehabilitation providers.

Clients are offered opportunities to move from sheltered to supported employment in community settings. Many community rehabilitation programs offer support group

activities for individuals who are working and receiving supported employment services in either the Vocational Rehabilitation or the extended Employment Support Services program.

- Another strategy has been to assist CRP providers to develop new integrated and competitive programs and service methodologies by advertising and awarding program development (Establishment Grant) contracts.

The ARSA's management of its contracts not only ensures compliance with minimum standards but also helps it to achieve goals and objectives for supported employment services in the State of Arizona.

## **SCOPE**

Supported employment services are provided to all clients of the VR program who have the need for such services, are eligible for such services, and for whom extended employment supports necessary for the individual to maintain employment have been identified. Services include: supplemental assessments of eligible clients as needed; development of and placement in jobs; time-limited on-going support such as on-the-job training, job coaching, supportive intervention and guidance counseling, follow-up services, etc.; post-employment services following transition from VR to extended supported employment services. The use of existing resources, including PASS/IRWEs is explored for every individual and, if available, is used to pay for extended supported employment. If other resources are not available, funds for long-term supports must be identified before proceeding with a VR IPE plan of service.

The ARSA is involved with special programming for the following three groups of clients.

### **Persons with developmental disabilities**

Time-limited VR supported employment services are the responsibility of ARSA. Responsibility for the ongoing employment support service (ESS) needs of individuals with developmental disabilities has been re-assigned to the Division of Developmental Disabilities. Employment related services are coordinated with the Division of Developmental Disabilities under a joint agreement that describes mutual roles and responsibilities. Coordination of services is handled at the local VR counselor/DDD support coordinator level.

### **Individuals with serious and chronic mental illnesses**

Individuals with serious and persistent mental illnesses are also served extensively by ARSA through its VR program. ARSA's agreement with Behavioral Health Services (DHS/BHS) calls for the ARSA to provide time-limited VR supported employment services and for DHS/BHS' contractors (the Regional Behavioral Health Authorities - RBHA) to provide the needed extended employment supports. An ISA Advisory Committee meets quarterly to evaluate the effectiveness of the agreement, to monitor the progress being made by mutual clients needing extended supported services, and to plan for the training needed by all parties to the agreement.

### **Other individuals with severe disabilities**

Through its collaboration with County Association of Governments in some areas of the state, ARSA is responsible for managing Title XX Social Services Block Grant funds to provide for the employment needs of individuals with severe disabilities. The ARSA currently uses these funds to pay for extended employment support needs of approximately 160 individuals.

### **EXTENT**

The VR eligibility process includes consideration of supported employment as an option to assist individuals with severe disabilities to attain employment outcomes. If long term funding/supports are available, the individual will be served in the VR program.

## **CERTIFICATION REGARDING LOBBYING**

*Applicants must review the requirements for certification regarding lobbying included in the regulations cited below before completing this form. Applicants must sign this form to comply with the certification requirements under 34 CFR Part 82, "New Restrictions on Lobbying." The certification shall be treated as a material representation of fact upon which reliance will be placed when the Department of Education decides to award the grant, cooperative agreement, loan or loan guarantee.*

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### **1. LOBBYING**

*As required by Section 1352, Title 31 of the U.S. Code, and implemented at 34 CFR Part 82, for persons entering into a grant or cooperative agreement over \$100,000, as defined at 34 CFR Part 82, Sections 82.105 and 82.110, the applicant certifies that:*

*(a) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the making of any Federal grant, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal grant or cooperative agreement;*

*(b) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal grant or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form - LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," in accordance with its instructions;*

*(c) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subgrants, contracts under grants and cooperative agreements, and subcontracts) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly.*

*As the duly authorized representative of the applicant, I hereby certify that the applicant will comply with the above certifications.*

<i>NAME OF APPLICANT NAME</i>	<i>PR/AWARD NUMBER AND / OR PROJECT NAME</i>
Arizona Rehabilitation Services Administration	84-126-VR
<i>PRINTED NAME AND TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE</i>	
Skip Bingham - Administrator	
<i>SIGNATURE</i>	<i>DATE</i>

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As the duly authorized representative of the applicant, I hereby certify that the applicant will comply with the above certifications.

NAME OF APPLICANT NAME	PR/AWARD NUMBER AND / OR PROJECT
Arizona Rehabilitation Services Administration	84-187-SES
PRINTED NAME AND TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE	
Skip Bingham - Administrator	
SIGNATURE	DATE

